

THE S A I N T S A D V A N T A G E :

O R
THE WELL-FARE OF
THE FAITHFVLL, IN
THE WORST TIMES.

Proving the worst estate of a Child of
God, to be better then the best estate of
any Wicked man.

By *John Wing*, Minister of the Gospell, and Pa-
stour to the English Church at *Flushing*
in *Zealand*.

2 Cor. 1. 3. 4.

3. *Blessed be God the Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and
God of all consolation.*
4. *Who comforteth us in our tribulation, that
we may be able to comfort them &c.*

L O N D O N,

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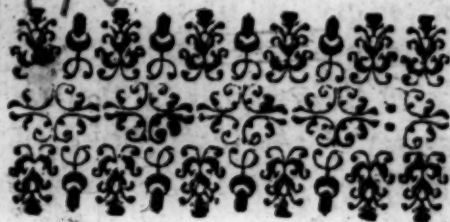
THE DAILY OVERLAND

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TO
THE MOST,
HIGH AND MIGHTY PRINCESSE,
ELIZABETH, by the
grace of God, Countesse
Palatine of the
Rhine. &c.

Most gracious Princeesse,

INASMUCH as it pleased your most excellent Majesty, to vouchsafe a Gracious care to the weake utterance of these Meditations, I am comfortably encouraged to present a more compleate
A 2 discourse

discovery of them, to your Princely eyes, not that I account them worthy (as they are mine) of the least looke of Majesty; but trusting wholly to that clemency and favour, which I humbly entreat, may shine from you, upon this my poore endeavour; it having (next to the honour of the most high God) her onely respect, and aime, at your Majesties present, and future condition; a true type whereof, is here tendered by him, whose soule doth daily sue unto the King of Kings, that as he hath measured unto, (and you have shared with,) Moyses and David, many tribulations in the entrance of their honour, and renowne, and after made them so much the more famous, admired, and victorious: So it,
might

might please the same Lord to
alot you the sweete happinesse of
their issue, which was most bles-
sed and glorious; to alay the dis-
taste of that bitter beginning,
which (unto nature) seemeth
somewhat tarte, and grievous;
and together with that peere-
lesse greatnesse which they en-
joyed on earth; the same glory
and joy, which they possesse in
heaven. The Great God of hea-
ven and earth blesse, with the
richest abundance, and combi-
nation of his rarest, and best
blesings, your Highnes, all your
hopefull Plants, and Princely
posterity, that your Crwne may
yet flourish, your enewies may e-
ver perish, and you all, may be
made mirrours of Majesty, and
Royalty, to all Generations.

Your Majesties in all
duty to be commanded,



THE
SAINTS
ADVANTAGE:

O R

The well-fare of
the faithfull, in the
Worst Times.

H E B R. 11. 26.

*Esteeming the reproach of Christ
greater riches than the trea-
sures in Ægypt.*



It is not much ma-
teriall untous, nei-
ther will it be
worth our time
and labour, to
looke after the *Writer* of this

A 4

Epistle,

Epistle, seeing it is past question that the *holy Ghost* was the *Author* of the same. And therefore we will not trouble our selves, or you, with any needlesse and fruitlesse search, what man of *God* it might be that penned it, seeing we are thoroughly perswaded that *God* himselfe inspired it; who having great abundance and variety of divine *Secretaries*, might employ whom he pleased in this service, and yet not be pleased to tell us who it was, whom he did employ in the same. It is not the lesse *canonicall*, or *authentike*, because we cannot tell who wrot it: the matter of it is knowne to be *Gods*, though no *name* of any man of *God*, be prefixed thereunto. The which, since the Lord in great wisdom hath concealed, how can we without grosse folly endeavour to discover it? he having thought good to hide it, it must be thought evill in us to make enquiry after it. What;

What; cannot a good message of glad tydings be welcome from our best friend, unlesse we may know the messengers name that brought it? Or shall not a *Patent* (from the *King*) containing matter of profit, or preferment; or a *Pardon* of some foule fact, be accepted and beleaved, if withall we may not be certified (by name) which of the *Secretaries of State* did write it? would not all the world censure it for unreasonable absurdity, absurd incivility, yea, and for most uncivill, and insufferable insolency, if a man should stand upon these termes with his *bettters*, and thus refuse the meanes of his welfare? were not such a one well *worthy* to be wofull, for want of that which he so *unworthily* refused? And if thus it be, in these temporall occurrents, which can concerne but our present externall advantage, it must of necessity be so much

the more evill, and intollerable, in these spirituall affaires, by how much in them, we have to doe with him, whose excellency and glory doth surmount all mens; and in those passages, which both in their owne nature, and in their consequence to us, doe infinitely and incomparably exceede, all the benefits of this present life, as being concerning the eternall, and inconceivable happinesse of our whole man for ever and ever in the heavens.

Had any important point of holy information depended upon the notice of the *Pen-man* of this part of scripture, we should assuredly have knowne who he had bin, for we have great reason to beleieve that our good God would not have withholden any good thing from us: we may therefore wel conclude that nothing could be gotten by it, seeing the *most wise God* will not let us know it; and what
idle

idle and sencelesse busi-bodies are we then, to make our selves such worthlesse and unprofitable worke, as will not pay for the time which is spent about it, nor yeeld any advantage, if it were finished, and the *Writer* revealed.

The more are men to be blamed, (*Divines* especially, and the best most of all) who make so much adoe about this particular, as if the *authority*, or *nullity* of this *Epistle* lay upon the *Writer*, rather then upon the *Authour* of the same. It would weary and tyre any man, and make him to mourne in his very soule, to see how men of eminent excellency, and worthy parts, have toyled in this *titular*, (I had almost said, *triviall*) businesse, disputed betweene *Papist* and *Papist*, betweene *Protestant* and *Papist*, yea, betweene *Protestant* and *Protestant*, as if it were a matter of more then words or names (as
Gallio

Gallio said) and of some mighty consequence, when as indeede it is not, neither hath any inference of any force or fruit annexed unto it, whose name soever it beare.

Some will have it to be *Pauls*, and for prooffe they pleade: First, the stile, and straine of it to be so like *his*, every where, that it must needs be *his owne* here: Secondly, the close, or conclusion of this Epistle *cap. 13. 25.* being the same which *Paul* saith he saluted his friends, and shut up all his *Epistles* with all: Thirdly, the authority of the Apostle *Peter* writing (as is thought) to the Hebrewes saying, *2 Pet. 3. 15. 16.* That *Paul* had written to them, and seemeth to point at this Epistle, because of the obscurity and difficulty of divers things therein: and together with these, divers other observable things are instanced, and urged in the body of the Epistle, (too long
for

for us now to relate) which make much probability that *Paul* wrot it.

Some others againe will not have it to be *Pauls*, but are perswaded some other holy man of God had the penning of it, and they plead : First, that his name is not to it, wheras *Pauls* manner was to set his name to all that are undoubtedly his : Secondly, that he, who wrot this Epistle seemeth not to have had the matter thereof *immediatly* from God (which *Paul* evermore had) but *mediatly* from some other, who heard it from *Christ*, as the words *cap: 2. 1. 2. 3.* doe import : together with some other likely passages which doe improve *Pauls* penning of it.

And this *unnecessary* controversy hath cost much time, and paines, even among men of great learning and godlinesse, who yet I am perswaded, cannot but know, that neither the
Inscriptions,

Isa. 55. 2.

Inscriptions, nor *Subscriptions* of these *Epistles* which have beene written by severall *Apostles*, are, or can in any good reason be accounted *Scripture*, considering how many just exceptions may be alledged against sundry of both sorts, to make them mistrusted, and subject to undeniable ambiguity, whereas all *Scripture* is absolutely infallible. How is it then that men lay out their money for that which is not bread? and take such paines for things that cannot profit? Summe up all the *Items* urged of either side, what will the *Totall* amount unto, but this, that inasmuch as some probability lyeth on their part, there is assurance on neither. Againe, admit and suppose it were sure on one side, either the *affirmative* that it were *Pauls*, what are we the better, or the wiser in the way to heaven for the certainty hereof? or on the *negative*

sive that it was none of *Pauls*,
 but that *Luke* (as some thinke)
 or *Barnabas*, or *Clement* (as
 others conceive) did pen it,
 what holinesse or happinesse is
 wonne, when all this is done?
 surely none. The most that can
 come of the former is onely
 this, that we may call it *the E-*
pistle of Paul to the Hebrewes,
 and put his name into our Cop-
 pies, as it is in all others except
 one (as one observeth.) The
 least that can come of the latter,
 is, that we leave out *Pauls*
 name, and all names, and call it
 as we finde it, *the Epistle to the*
Hebrewes: which title or in-
 scription, being indifferent to
 either side, we will rest in the
 same as it is, without further
 contention or inquisition, see-
 ing either *Pauls*, or any other
 name noted before, may be *pro-*
ably put in, and yet *safely left*
out, let us take it without any at
 all, and so proceed from the
Writer, to the *matter contained*
 in

in that which is written, especially in that little parcell which hath beene read, and in the revealing whereof, we intend (by *Gods* grace) to insist at this time.

And that we may the better come to comprehend what the will and minde of the Lord is therein, it shall be good to goe backe a little, to looke upon the generall state of the whole Chapter, and to take such a view of the same, as may further us in the particular of these words.

And what is this Chapter (being well considered) but a kinde of *Summary* or *Abridgement*, of the old Testament in that part thereof especially, which is *historicall*, and containeth the discovery of things done in matter of fact, by those most famous *Worthies* of the Lord, the eminency of whose faith, and excellency of the fruits of the same, have here a most

most glorious remembrance, being left upon an everlasting record that cannot faile, but must and shall remaine to the *blessed memoriall of those just men*, the tryall of whose faith having beene more precions than gold, shall be found unto (the Lords, and their owne) praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearance of Iesus Christ.

Prov. 7.

1 Pet. 1. 7.

Of which *Worthies* (both men and women) we have here a particular *Catalogue*, many of them being (*by name*) personally expressed, from the beginning of the Chapter to the 33. *verse*: and others apparantly included (though *not named*) from thence to the end. And in this *Catalogue* it pleaseth the holy Ghost to keepe an excellent *dicorum*, in an orderly and methodicall distribution of the persons, according to the times wherein they lived, and the *Chronologie* of the world, in the

the most famous *Periods* of the same under the old Testament.

Vers. 14.

It beginneth with righteous *Abell*, vers. 4. who lived not long after the Creation (being the second from *Adam*) and goeth on from him to *Enoch* the seventh from *Adam* (as *Iude* calls him:) & from *Enoch* to *Noah*, & so finisheth the first famous period of the world, from the *Creation*, to the *Flood*; and begins the second from the flood to *Abraham*, and the rest of those peerelesse *Patriarchs*, who lived after the *Flood*, & before the *Law* till *Moses*; who overliving them all, did finish the second famous period from the flood to the giving of the *Law*, & made entrance into the third, from *Moses* and the *Law* given, to the time of the *Judges*. & so frō thence forward to the change of the civell government of the *Jewes*, from *Judges* to *Kings*: & under their *Kings* both during the time of their settled and peaceable state, and also thence,

thence, unto those interrupted and miserable dayes, wherein Captivity prevailed; both at the *first, in part*, to their disturbance once, and againe for a time; and *at the last* to the *totall* and *finall* downe-fall and over-throw of that Nation, as touching any visible face, either of *civill*, or an *ecclesiasticall* estate.

Now in this *Campe Royall*, of such as are here numbred, named, and made glorious by the notable fruits of their faith; some have renowned themselves (as servants) *actively* by doing, others have beene approved (as Souldiers) *passively* by suffering; but *Moses* (being the *man* in our *Text*) is truly interessed into either condition, and hath made *double* declaration of his faith, in both kindes of those things that are reported of him, for we finde both what he did, and what he endured, and so much of either, as doth manifest him for one of the

the rarest mirrours among those many, who are mustered and magnified here, to have fought *the good fight of faith*; and that, in all those occurrents that came to passe (on his part) either before *Israell* went out of *Ægypt*, or after; for within one of these two computations of time, all is comprehended which is recorded of him, and for which he is here applauded by the holy Ghost.

The powerfull worke of faith appearing in him before the *Israelites* departure from under *Pharaoh*, had a *two-fold* operation.

1. While he was yet a *Courtier*, (and great in Court too) being for so long time the adopted, and reputed sonne of *Pharaohs* daughter, in which time faith wrought in his heart a *gracious resolution*, to give over that *glorious condition*.

2. When he puts this resolution into practise, casting off the

the Court, and forsaking *Egypt* for a season, and afterwards returning by warrant from God (and as the Lords Ambassador) to worke out the peoples freedom: and these passages are particulated unto us, in the 24. 25. 26. and 27. Verses.

The further efficacy wherein his faith shined, after he had left *Egypt* altogether, and was gone thence with Gods people, is evident in such relation as is made thereof, ver. 28. 29.

Our Text is a part of the former power of his faith, while he was yet in *Egypt*, wherein, (and that while he was yet a great *Peere*, among these *Pagans*) the Lord mightily, and *extraordinarily*, wrought in him immediatly by himselfe, without all ordinary meanes (that man can imagine) this great grace of Faith, which by a holy kinde of heavenly and divine *violence*, enforced him to these three things which

which lye in these three verses.

1.

1. To relinquish and renounce his whole estate, with all the honours, and advantages annexed thereunto, all which, although he had long enjoyed them, and they were many and great, at present, and might (possibly) have been much greater afterward, thorough the hope of his further rising by means of the favour of *Pharaohs daughter*, yet saith makes nothing of these mighty things, but he freely forsaketh all, and willingly refuseth to be called or accounted *her Sonne*, vers. 24.

2.

2. To chuse (in stead of this rejected honour and royalty) the miserable and most afflicted state of the people of God, who were in the greatest slavery, and under the most grievous tyranny that could be, *verse. 25.*

3.

3. To judge and censure
(and

ver- (and that with a righteous
re- judgment) both his former
with practises of *refusing* and *chusing*,
nta- to be lawfull, and good, and
all well pleasing to the Lord, vers.
26.

ong And this *third* is the onely
vere thing, wherewith we have to
and doe, yet before we enter upon
ene it in *particular*, we have one
ho- observable thing to note in the
ri- *generall*, to wit, That those gra-
r of ces which are immediately,
aich and extraordinarily wrought in
hty man by the Lord, doe carry
eth mans heart extraordinarily to-
o be wards the Lord. If God worke
ne, faith extraordinarily in *Abra-
ham*, he will leaue his Country;
his he will sacrifice his son, *doe* any
ty) thing, *deny* nothing, at Gods
ted command. If in *Moses* he will
od, leave all the honour, and riches,
ve- and happinesse in the world,
ic- and expose himselfe to any mi-
be, sery, danger, and infamy for the
honour of God. The same
ure might be said of *Ioseph*, of *Ester*,
nd and

Faith
wrought
extraordi-
narily.

and many other, whose graces have yeelded rare and wonderfull *fruit*, because they sprung from more then an ordinary *root*. The more immediate any mans graces are from God, the more admirable are the manifestations of those graces before God.

The parts
of the text

But we intend not to stay here: let us therefore set forward to this *third* effect of *Moses* faith in the words of the 26. *verse* (containing the estimation of his said acts) and in them, we have to consider three things.

1. The guide and ground of this his estimation, to wit, *Faith*, not common sence, nor carnall reason, for neither of these would have endured any such proceedings.

2. The things esteemed, to wit, the *reproch* of *Christ*, and the *riches* of *Agypt*, and these being ballanced by *faith*, and laid one, against another, the former

former is found to be much better, and larre beyond the latter.

3. The reason of this his opinion, which ariseth not from any respect of things *present* and *sensible*, but onely and wholly from the happy apprehension, and assurance, that he had of that *invisible*, and *infinite* recompence of reward layd up for those who can forgoe all things for Gods glory.

And these are the parts of this verse; touching which, we shall not neede to make any stay upon the interpretation of any of them, there being no obscurity, or ambiguity, but all being easie and open to the meaneest capacity, we will therefore hasten to the matter of instruction which they doe administer unto us.

And heere, in the very first word [*Esteeming*] (inasmuch as his faith made him thus to *esteem*) we might note unto
B you,

3.

A speciall
property
of Faith.

you, one excellent property and power of true faith, which is, to alter the minde, opinion and judgment of man from that it was, touching the world, and all things therein; to esteeme the best things therein so base as to preferre and chuse the basest estate in the world, before that which in the eye of the world is the best. Time was that *Moses* could make use of, and possesse the honours of *Egypt*, for forty yeares together; but now (unto faith) affliction is better then promotion, slavery then honour, he will rather be a captive with God's people, then a gallant *Courtier*; even the son of a Kings daughter: he is now otherwise conceited, opinionated, and perswaded then before he was. *Faith* hath so altered the case with him, that he is nothing so minded as he was.

It is no marvell that the holy Ghost opposeth *faith*, and
sence

sence, and that the Apostle saith (*we walke by faith, and not by sight*) for they looked not on things that were seene, but lived by faith, which fed it selfe, and fastened them on, things not seene, and so they accounted and judged all things base and vile, yea *losse* and *dung*, (yea as most loathsome and execrable excrements, as the word signifies:) and could well brooke to have themselves accounted the base of-scouring of all things, through the excellency of faith that was in them.

Phil. 3. 8.

Let no man vainely boast of this vertue, or imagine he hath himselfe posselt of this singular grace, to whose minde, judgment, and estimation, all things are not so base and abominable, that he can (being put to it by God.) most willingly abandon, and abhorre all riches and glory; and freely

take up all affliction, wretchednesse and misery; yea, and rather (as our *Moses* here) make a good choise of the *worst*, then make an ill use of the *best*, that the world can afford. True *faith* (where it is) is of a noble, heroically heavenly, and divine disposition, and carries the heart of man into *high contempt* of the things which before he had in *highest esteeme*, scorning in the least, to stoope to the greatest and most glorious lure, that can be offered of the things that are below, and doth disdain to looke after those advantages which are most deare unto others.

But we must not dwell here neither, neither is it our present purpose to prosecute this point, but to set forward unto that whereon we intend (by *Gods grace*) to insist: and that is taken from the *second* consideration; which is of the things esteemed, and they (being compared

pared one with another) the
[*reproach of Christ* is found far
to exceede, and to be much bet-
ter, then the *treasures in Egypt*]

From whence the maine thing
which we have to learne for
our instruction is thus much.

*That the worst estate of a
childe of God, is better, then the best
estate of any wicked man.*

Doctrine

Note it well ; we say and a-
vouch, that the worst estate of
Gods childe, is better then the
best of a wicked man.

For the better understanding
and beleeving of which point,
because at *first sight*, it may
seeme a strange *Paradoxe*, and
a proposition impossible to be
true; it shall be necessary before
we come to prove the same, to
explaine it before you, and to
give all men to understand, what
we meane by the *worst estate* of
Gods child, and by the *best es-
tate* of a wicked man.

And (in a word) *thus* we
meane: that, looke what the

world (that is , the men of the world) doe esteeme and judge (on the one part) to be the meanest and most miserable state of any good man : and also what they themselves doe againe conceive (on the other part) to bee their owne most happy and comfortable condition , that (on either part) we intend in this our instruction.

Now all men doe know , that the world doth repute affliction , disgrace , tyranny , persecution , and all kinde of cruelty , and slavery , to be the unhappiest case a man can possibly be in : and on the other side , the honour , wealth , prosperity and abundance of all things which the heart of man can wish , when every thing goes with him as he would have it , and all things settle upon him to his soules content : this is adjudged the happiest state of him , or them

them that have it. And this is that we account the best of the one; and the worst of the other, even that, which themselves doe account so, we aske no other interpreters of our meaning, then the men of the earth, in their ordinary and universall opinion.

And of these estates being thus understood, we are to prove, and make good, that the former (*being the worst*) is better to a child of God, then the latter (*being the best*) can be, to an ungodly man: yea, that the very gall and worme-wood, and the most *bitter* and envenomed things which the world can give the godly to drinke; are happier, are more holosome to digest, then the *sweetest* portion of their cup, who are ungodly, when it is filled up to the brim, & running over with all the rarest, and most pleasant compositions which the world can powre into it, of all manner

of delicacies and delights that are to be desired either for pleasure, or for profit, or for honour, or for ease, or for ought else, which may take up and bewitch the mind, of a worldly man. And thus our meaning being explained, the matter remaineth now to be proved.

The full confirmation whereof, will soone arise out of the due consideration of our text, and the true contents of the same, in case we take such true notice of them as we ought.

Were there no other man but *Moses*, no other evidence or example to make good the point but *he alone*, in that which he hath here done; he onely were able to avouch the truth we teach against all *gaine sayers* whatsoever; inasmuch as we finde his practise to be of worthy approbation with God, and also worthy to be a most worthy president unto us from God and that it is recorded, not onely

ly for *his commendation*, but for *our imitation* also: in which act of his, let us note these particular and singular passages, which may leade us the more to beleeve the truth we are to confirme.

First, how he was brought into the favour of *Pharaoh*, to wit, by a strange and extraordinary providence of God, disposing his Parents there to hide him, where the daughter of *Pharaoh* must discover him, and in disposing her heart (having found him) to commiserate the miserable and helples condition of this forlorne and desolate infant, whom his own father and mother durst not owne, or acknowledge, but being the *Kings decree* enforced to cast him out, the *Kings* daughter is directed by the Lord to pittie him for the present, and to provide to have him nursed and nurtered, as her owne sonne, by adoption,

for time to come.

2.

Secondly, being thus adopted by her, and nursed, (by his owne mother as the almightie did order and manage it) she tooke further care and order for his education, so as he might be made meete for honour and advancement in her fathers house and service; whereas she might have brought him up, in some base and servile manner, according to the quality of a *Captives* childe, yea, and the Lord filled him with understanding & capacity to become furnished in *all the learning of the Egyptians*.

Acts 7.22.

3.

Thirdly, being thus qualified, he came to eminency and grew great in Court; *Pharaoh* not refusing to preferre him, though he could not but (in all likelihood) know him to be an *Ebrev* childe, and his preferment seemes to be some great office of worth, and renews, and that brought him in abundance

dance of wealth; why else are the treasures of *Egypt* (on *Moses* part) opposed to the reproach of Christ? It may be he was *Lord-Treasurer of Egypt*. (Who can tell the contrary?)

Fourthly, being thus invested into honour, and wealth, he continued therein for no small time, but full *forty yeares*, which length of time did so season him in the sweetnesse of what he had, as might (in all reason) make him most loth, and unwilling to leave the same.

4

Acts. 7. 48.

Fifthly, having thus long enjoyed all this favour, he was free to hold it still if he would; no man doth basely underminde him by suborning *Pharaoh* against him, or by detection of him to have beene a base *Ebrew bratt* from the beginning, and so to enrage the King against him for that he had crept in thus farre, and kept in thus long: neither is any thing

5

thing attempted by any man, which might make *Moses* to be discontent with his present state, and so resolve in a humor to leave it, but he might hold what he had at his pleasure, even for perpetuity.

6. *Sixtly*, adde to all these, that if he will be going hence, either *Egypt* will be too hot for him, or if he will tarry therein, and joyne himselfe to his owne people, he could not but see *Pharaohs* tyranny, and their misery much encreasing.

Their burdens heavier,

Their task-master fiercer,

Their bondage sorer.

And his owne among them, (if he will needes make one) to be more extreame and extraordinary than all the rest, because he left so much honour, and ease, and wealth, willingly to come to calamity, t'were pittie (would *Pharaoh* say) but he should have enough of it, that was so willing to it, and therefore

fore let him (of all men) be most vexed, pursued and oppressed above others, who was so witlesse that he could not tell when he was well, and tarry in that happinesse which was so graciously and freely conferrd upon him, and wherein he might have continued (through the Kings kindnesse and grace) the longest day of his life, and would not.

These few (with some others moe, that might be instanced) being layd together on a heape, doe make up mighty evidence in the eye of carnall reason to condemne *Moses* of manifest folly in forsaking his present state, and following this course wherunto he betooke himselfe at this time.

But bring them all (and all that can be pleaded to the same purpose) and let *faith* looke upon them, that which was a *beame* before, is not so much as a *moath* now, nor worthy in any

ny wise to be respected; this one grace melts all these great things into meere nullities, and makes nothing of every thing that was before urged to this end: neither the kindnesse of the *Kings daughter*, nor the favour of the *King her father*, nor all the great things he got by both, nor his long keeping of them, nor his undoubted danger, and disgrace in leaving them, nor every of these alone, nor all of them together, could doe any thing with *Moses*, but he is resolute, (by faith) to forgoe the best estate the earth could yeeld him, that he might partake with the worst, and most woefull condition of Gods people, and to shew it, the holy Ghost doth witnesse, that he did willingly *chuse* the one, and *refuse* the other, being not forced (by flesh and blood) to either, that so the power of *faith* might fully and freely expresse it selfe, in both, against
all

all apprehensions, and objections of man whatsoever.

And why shou'd he have done thus, if he had not knowne our *Doctrine* to be a most undeniable truth? And how came he to know so much, but by the extraordinary instinct of Gods immediate illumination? Who revealed thus much to him and gave him both *faith* to beleieve it, and *conscience* to doe it accordingly, in spite of whatsoever might be suggested to the contrary. And why should not we fully assent to the truth thereof, seeing *God*, in doing, the same? Especially seeing besides *Moses* practise, *Gods* approbation, doth warrant us; the Lord hath set to his hand (as it were) and confirmed, and commended this act of *Moses* unto us as a fruit of that holinesse and piety which was in him, and should be

be in us, who are commanded to follow the faith of such, as (by *God*) are well reported of unto us, as this man is, who hath a most savoury name, in the midd st of this sacred Catalogue, wherein so many Saints of rare note, are recorded unto us, and as much (if not more) is spoken of his faith, then of many others, and more of this one fruit of the same, then of all the rest:

So that, which is here written of this man, doth ratifie the matter we have in hand, his practise (thus considered as we have said) is plenary prooffe of our point; it had beene apparent vanity, and giddinesse, not any power, or truth of godlinesse in him, if he had not done by *Gods* direction, who by his spirit informed his minde, and conformed his practice, and (by both) confirmed this undoubted truth unto us: otherwise, it might have well beene thought

thought, he was more *braine-sicke* then obedient, and beene led from this glory, to that misery, by *frenzie*, rather than by *faith*. But *faith* made glorious things vile, and vile things glorious unto him, and so he left the *better* state which was (indeede) the *worse*, and chose the *worse*, which was (indeede) the *better*, that all men might learne to know the lawfulness of his carriage herein, and the conscience of their owne, if in any such like case, God call them unto the like course.

Now if besides this of *Moses*, we should muster up more examples to this end, it were most easie, (but not very necessary) so to doe: this Chapter would furnish us with a multitude of those that have (in like manner) done worthily, and beene famous for this very thing.

What thinke you of *Abraham*, how were his thoughts,
how

how stood his heart this way
Was he not well in his
owne Country? Could
man be better, then to dwell
in his owne free land, and
to have so great abundance as
he had of all good things
Yet he must leave all this
fee-simple, - and whatsoever
he had upon it, to goe he
knowes not whither, onely
this he knowes, that whither
soever it is, he hath not a
foote of ground, nor any
thing at all there, but must
come from a rich inheritance
and great estate, where he
might command; to sojourn
and be entertained as a stran-
ger upon courtesie, where he
could get foode and lodging
for his money. And this he
did at Gods command, of
his owne accord and uncon-
strained, as soone as he
heard he did obey, which he
had no reason at all to have
done, if faith had not furnished
him

way him with this perswasion, and
 his furthered him to this practise:
 and he not knowne the worst
 place and state God called
 him unto, to have beene
 incomparable better then the
 best God called him from;
 this had never stirred his foote?
 but being convinced of this
 truth, and mooved of God,
 he went willingly out, as one
 that knew well, the worst
 that he could goe unto to wit-
 nesse his obedience as a child
 of God, would prove more
 happy to him, then all he
 should enjoy and possesse upon
 other termes.

It were but a fruitlesse filling
 of time, to adde more exam-
 ples to a thing so evident, and
 undeniable as this truth is, we
 will therefore passe from these,
 to the *reasons* of the Doctrine,
 to understand why these things
 are so, and how they come to
 passe; and hereunto we have the
reason because this that
 we

we teach, seemeth to be against all reason, and sence, that man can commonly conceive.

I doe freely professe what *first* I apprehended it in my heart, it appeared like a strange *Paradox* to my selfe, a point incapable of truth, impossible to be beleaved; and therefore I doe not wonder that it should be so hard of digestion to corrupt nature, and carnall reason, and that it will not downe with so many: *Nature* cannot entertaine it, it is *grace* that may first rectifie nature, and then certifie it hereof. The Lord neuer put this opinion into any mans heart, nor urged the practice of it at his hand, before he had refined his understanding from the dross and dotage, ignorance, and error; wherewith it stands defiled by corrupt nature: let us then stop the mouth of yea, the breath, of flesh and bloud, and open the passage of the spirit of God, and give

ce vent unto them, and they
 will soone shew us the way
 and that by good reason too)
 be thoroughly possessed of
 this point of truth, and that it
 is most worthy to be credited
 and embraced by us.

And the reasons inducing us
 thereto, doe arise out of the
 consideration, of a *double*
conclusion, which we will pro-
 pound and prove unto you, that
 you may carry them in minde
 wheremore, as *golden* and most
 precious remembrances, wor-
 thy to be engraven deeply and
 perpetually, in our hearts, that
 neither *Satan*, nor the world,
 might ever raze them out, but
 that they might remaine with
 us all our dayes, even till death.
 And the *conclusions* are these
 two.

Two Con-
 clusions.

1. No estate can be *evill* to
 a child of God, but even his
 worst, is *good* for him, yea *best*
 unto him.

2. No estate can be *good* to

a wicked man, but even his *best* is evill to him, yea worse for him.

The very *worst* prooves worse to a godly man, and *bad* is the *best*, to the ungodly. And the cleare confirmation of these two *Conclusions*, the reasons of our Doctrine will more evidently arise unto us, for they cannot but follow, yea follow most naturally in the course of all sound argumentation, that if the ones *evill* be *good* to him, and the others *good* become *vill* to him, then must the meanest estate of the former, be much more excellent, than the greatest happinesse of the latter.

Now either of these *Conclusions* resteth upon undeniable prooffe and demonstration.

1 Conclusion
proo-
ved.

For the *first* thus: That estate which commeth unto a childe of God, accompanied with the infinite love, wisdom, goodnesse, and power of God, must needs be best unto

ven to him: But his worst estate
 a wor commeth thus upon him: There-
 fore it must needs be best to
 es w him. Nothing here is so much
 is th as questionable; for sence sayes
 And the *first* Proposition is true, that
 on what comes so, comes well.
 he re And the *Word* of God in the evi-
 l me dence thereof, upon all his af-
 for flicted ones, saith the *second* is
 a flo as true; the *third* then must is-
 rse sue undoubtedly out of them
 th both.

o his Againe, that estate which
 me worketh towards the fur-
 me therance of our *best good* of all,
 er, must needs be best for us; But
 n the worst, the most woefull,
 atre and distressed state of every
 oncl child of God doth worke for
 niab the *best*: therefore it is *best* for
 him. In this argument all is
 at found, for no man can doubt of
 nte the *first* Proposition, and the
 ani Apostle puts the *second* out of
 wil doubt, where he saith (*all things*,
 ow (and there he comprehends
 tu the worst things the world
 can

Rom. 8. 28

can yeeld) (*worke together for the best* :) the conclusion then comes in of it selfe. And so the first ground is cleare.

2 Conclusion proved.

For the *second* thus. That estate which doth so harden mans heart, that he becometh thereby least capable of mercy, and most lyable to justice, (and so furthereth his utmost confusion, and eternall overthrow) must of necessity be the *worst* for a man that may be: But a wicked mans *best* estate doth thus: Therefore even his *best* estate is miserable to him. No man can with any colour question the first Proposition; and God gives us sound confirmation of the second, where he saith (*ease slayeth the foolish, and the prosperity of fools destroyeth them* :) heie, by the (*foole*) we must understand the ungodly man, and by (*prosperity*) all that which he judgeth most happy to himselfe in this life. Now if nothing bring a wicked

Prov. 1. 32

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wicked man sooner to destru-
tion than that which he most
fecteth, and desireth, surely,
he same is *worst* of all for him.

Againe, that must needs be
mans worst estate, which is
most accursed of God to a man:
but a wicked mans *best* estate
most accursed of God unto
him: Therefore his *best* estate
cannot be but *worst* unto him.
The *first* Proposition is easie,
and evident (of it selfe) to be
believed: The *second* is avou-
ned by *Moses*, where he cur-
th in the name of the Lord
all the encrease, and store, and
fruit of a wicked man, whether
of his body, or beast, or ground]

Now if his encrease be accur-
sed, then the more he hath, the
more accursed he is, and as ei-
ther himselfe, or any thing he
hath aboundeth, so doth the
curse of God abound with it;
he grow from *hundreds* to
thousands, so also doe his cur-
ses multiply from the Lord,

C who

Deut. 28.
17. 18.

Mal. 2. 2.

Note.

who hath *curfed* the *blessings* of
every ungodly person. And
is to be marked, (*as a most r*
markable curse) that he is n
curfed in the want of fruit, o
barrenesse of his bodie, bea
or ground, for that would eve
common man account a cur
indeede, but, he is accursed
the possession, and prosperit
and growth of these thing
and this is a more wofull,
how much it is a more wond
full curse, that a man shou
have so much, and be so mu
the more unhappy by havi
it. So then, if thus it be, then
a wicked mans *best* estate w
for him, because it is most
curfed to him.

And thus these *two Concl*
ons stand upon cleare and
questionable grounds, and
impregnable truthes, and
ing so, our maine *Doctrin*
needs issue from them both,
naturall as water from a fou
taine; and that thus.

If no estate can be evill unto a *good man* but even his *worst* is good unto him; and (on the contrary) if no estate can be good to a *wicked man*, but even his *best* is evill to him; why then it must needs come to passe, that the *worst* estate of Gods childe is *better* then the *best* of any wicked man: But both these have beene abundantly prooved & therefore the truth we teach, is fully confirmed; can any man so much as once doubt at all, whether the meanest *good* estate be to be preferred to the greatest that is *evill*? or demurre whether he should chuse of the *two*, (if he were put to it) a *poore* and perplexed condition, which may help him to heaven, or a prosperous and *opulent* estate, which would hasten him to hell? Certainly this question would soone be assoyled, if it were put to any man (had he but sence) to be determined, for naturall reason would

give quicke resolution, that the *worst* of that whereby a man might be happy, were to be chosen and preferred, before the best of that which will procure a mans misery.

Why then? the *worst* of the one being *so good*, and the *best* of the other *so bad*, we cannot but yeeld to our *Doctrine*, being overcome by undeniable evidence, both of example, in him that hath tryed both estates by his owne experience; and of reason, approoving that which he (upon tryall) had practised, in refusing the *best* of the one, to chose the *worst* of the other. So that if we beleeve either *Moses* (who is the man that hath done it) to evidence the truth of his faith, or *God*. who hath magnified *Moses* in that which he hath done, to be truly faithfull, our minds must be thoroughly settled in the assured perswasion of what we have to plainly propounded,
and

and proved so plentifully, and hold it fast unto our own hearts, as our duty to doe the like, if the Lord shall cast any the like occasion upon us, and call us forth, to try, and declare our faith, by being put to the practise of this truth, to see whether we will so esteeme the reproach of *Christ*, and the persecution of the Saints, that we will give over and abandon, the riches of the earth, and *the pleasures of sinne*, to embrace the bitternesse of those that are beloved of God, before the sweetest delicacies of those who are abhorred of him. A time may come, when it may be our turne either to avouch this Doctrine by our conformity therunto, or deny the Lord who hath avouched it to be his truth. And cursed are they who stand convinced in *conscience*, of any truth of God, whereunto they refuse to yeeld *obedience*.

We should doe all well then

Pro. 10 14

to doe (as the Wise-man saith all wise men doe) to wit, (*lay up knowledge*) even the knowledge of this particular, to bring it into practise, that our good workes sutable to it, may make good this word of God which hath shewed it to us, and that therein, every man may become a *Moses*, to be thus faithfull before the Lord, as he was, in this thing.

And that we may be the better brought unto it, and have our naughty hearts the more happily provoked to the holy purpose of this heavenly practise; let us now proceede from the apparent prooffe of the point to the powerfull application of the same, unto all such, unto whom it doth, or may any way appertaine: *that is*, all sorts of men, both good and bad, Saints and sinners; something it hath to say unto either of them severally a'under, and something to them both, joyntly together. There is
very

faith very little truth (if any at all)
(say that God revealeth, but it lookes
every way, and is of some im-
portant consequence to all per-
sons whatsoever, if the sap and
juyce of it be pressed & wrung
out, as it ought to be.

Let us then in the *first* place
consider of what use it is to Gods
owne people, and what fruit of
comfort his blessed and beloved
ons, doe receive from the sacred
truth which we have sowne for
nothing but heavenly joy, and
sweet consolation, can be reaped
and carried in, to them from any
thing which the Lord hath re-
vealed from heavē; for it is writ-
ten, (*Light is sown for the righte-
ous, & joy for the upright in heart.*)

And (to speake as the truth
is) what child of God can speake
of this truth, or heare of it being
spoken, without solace to his
very soule, if he have faith to
beleeve the same? Certainly, if
we be not comforted by it, it is
because we are not confirmed
in

Vse 1.

Comfort
to Gods
children.

Pla. 97. 11

in it; were we well resolved of it, we could not but rejoyce in the assurance thereof.

For why? What is it that troubles and perplexes a child of God, but his present estate of misery and distresse; and the worse a mans misery is, the more woefull is our distraction through the same, and when it comes to the *worst*, many times we grow from distraction to desperation, and begin to throw our selves into forlorne and hopelesse and infernall conceits touching our present condition, & to give over both our selves, and all expectation of ever being any more happy; the present cloud of our calamity, is so thicke and darke, that we can see no sun shine through it; nor dreame of any more good dayes during our lives, but make account to be perpetually miserable and unhappy, and to be in so bad case, as none can be in worse, nor *many*, nay, scarce

scarce any, (as we thinke) in the like.

Now in this case, what can be more truely said to the *Saints* then that of *Christ* to the *Sadducees*, (*Ye erre not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God;*) it is onely your ignorance that makes you ill conceited of the state you are in, and to mistake both it and your selves so much as you doe; did you understand the Scriptures, and the power of this truth of *God*, as we have made it plaine? it would soone be seene, how wide you were from the truth of your estate; for, whereas you thinke (now you are at worst) its scarce possible that any body should be so bad, this truth will tell you; and teach you to know, both that you are now no worse then any child of *God* may be; as also that no wicked man is, or can be so well at his best, as you are and shall ever be at your worst.

Mat. 22.
29.

And indeede so much, that are
 more sweete & heavenly is the tha
 benefit of this doctrine, by how tor
 much it expells the deadly ve on,
 nime and poyson, of one of the flie
 most heavy and hellish tempta no
 tions that doth usually surpriz ou
 the soule of them that are afflic sec
 ted and humbled of God. And fa
 that is, the aime and estimation w
 they have taken of themselves ne
 and their estates, (not considered h
 in it selfe, but) compared with h
 others, who are wholly free o
 and feeble no such sorrow or t
 extremity as they doe: And h
 monly the Devill carries the A
 eye, and settles the observation l
 of Gods children, onely upon
 such impious, and prophane
 persons, as escape the misery
 whereinto they are fallen; and
 having fastned them upon such
 an object, he then turmoyle the
 minde, and tyrannizeth over
 the thoughts, and doubles, yea
 multiplies the vexations of their
 soules, not so much that they
 are

Note.

h- there in distresse, but, most of all,
 is that others are out, who are no-
 y how notoriously ungodly; and hereup-
 y v on, their thoughts doe offer to
 of th flie in Gods face, as if he were
 npta nothing so gracious, or righte-
 priz ous, as he is magnified to be,
 affl seeing he lets his owne children
 An fare so ill, & suffers his enemies
 as io who are *rebels* against him, and
 lve no better then *dogs* or *swine*, (in
 ere his accom) to be as well as
 vit heart can wish: and it is *kindnes*
 free or *justice*, in any earthly father
 ex to use his children worfe then
 om his cattell? and if not how much
 the *lesse love* and *more wrong*, must it
 ion be in him that is heavenly, who
 on makes himselfe the mirrour of
 ne all mercy, and favour: & then as
 ry *God* is thus censured, so are wic-
 d ked men applauded & the gene-
 ch ration of the just condemned.

Satan hath not set upon a few
 with this suggestion, and there
 are not many who have beene
 assaulted, but they have bin foy-
 led. The stoutest of *Gods* army
 have

have shrinke shrewdly, and well neere fainted, through frailty, a man would wonder to see such mighty champions so miserably disheartened, and discontented, when they have taken notice how themselves have beene afflicted, and other (most ungodly persons) exempted from the evils where-with they have beene heavily laden so long.

David was so deeply discontented herat, that he began to conceit well of wicked mens estate, and to question (yea, and condemne) his owne, and all the people of *God*, concerning this thing, when he saw the prosperity of sinners, and the misery of himselfe. Let himselfe give us evidence how he was gastard, and like to have gone quite beside himselfe, yea to have fallen right downe, the divell had so mislead him, and tript up his heeles, that he was even gone and ready to give

Psal. 73.

1. 2. 3. 4.

give over all : we have the particulars related by himselfe at large in the 73 *Psalme*; where he tells us, how this very thing had like to have cost him an irrecoverable fall, and wounded him almost incurably; and how much a doe he had to bring his heart to the due consideration of this matter, and to temper his minde which was so mightily *distempered*, with *doating* on his owne distresses, and *dreaming* of their happinesse; and when he compared these together, (to wit, the welfare, and his owne affliction) he was in a heavy taking, and growing towards a hydeous resolution; even (as it were) to *hang his religion on the hedge*, and to jayne himselfe to such as were hellishly irreligious, because at the present they were in better case then he. Neither was this temptation for a *little* time nor did it, (during the time it held him) trouble him a *little*,
but

but it stucke long by him, and bit the bone; insomuch that he could either easily, or quickly, come to settle himselfe into better, or sounder thoughts that he might stay himselfe upon the truth. And why, (I pray you) did his owne *bad*, and their *good* estate, trouble and puzzle him so much? was it not because he was not either at all informed, or not well advised of this truth we teach from *God*, who hath avouched unto us (as we have heard) that the *worst* estate of his owne people, is incomparable beyond the *best* prosperity of wicked persons? Had *David* learned this lesson well, all this labour, and danger, had beene spared, and he had beene well able, to have waded happily through the deepest temporary unhappinesse, the world could have brought upon him.

Nor was *David* the onely man in this conflict, but good *Jeremiah* (a man of no meane piety,

and piety, or ordinary parts) he was
 also very sorely put too it in this
 particular, and never so neere
 a conquest in any *combate*, as in
 this: his owne mouth shall say
 how he was amazed, and put to
 a pittifull *non-plus*, when he
 considered, the course of Gods
 dispensation of these outward
 favours, That *God was righteous*
 he durst not deny, he knew it
 right well; but a reason why
 wicked men should be in rest &
 peace, and himselfe so wretched
 he could not any way compre-
 hend this he saw, that *they were*
had in honour and admiration, he
was in contempt & derision; herat
 he was at his wits end with
 wondring, and though he con-
 fess he durst not enter into dis-
 putation with God, yet he is bo'd
 to aske him the question, & en-
 treat him to tell him, how, and
 why, *they are in peace, and are*
planted, & doe prosper, that trans-
gres rebelliously? whereas with
 him (& other of Gods holy ones)
 it

Iere. 12. 1
 2, 3.

it was nothing so, but contrarywise all misery and calamity that could be, came upon them; how this should be, he could not tell, he desires to talke with God about it, not being sufficient to answer and satisfie himselfe in this thing. And how came it to passe that a Prophet of God, of surpassing sanctity and holinesse, of extraordinary understanding and knowledge, a man mighty in grace, of an impregnable spirit, was thus battered & beaten downe with this weapon? why surely, for ought we can see, the onely reason was because he had not yet girt on the powerfull shield of this precious truth, to save him harmelesse of the dreadfull dint of that poysoned sword wherewith he hath hurt so many holy saints of the living God; had he beene armed with the evidence of this doctrine, and able to have said, (*thus*) why? the very worst of a child of God is beyond

beyond the *best* of an ungodly
man, this point had never made
any scruple, nor beene occasion
of any doubt, or demurre in his
mind, himselfe had beene soone
satisfied, *Satan* had beene soone
confuted, all, on all sides had
beene so well resolved, that ei-
ther there would have beene a
quicke end, or no beginning of
this businesse.

Vnto these *two*; it were too
easie to instance many more (in
Gods booke) *as great*, and *as*
great as they, who have beene
surprized in the same kinde, but
it is needlesse to multiply more
that have beene so assaulted, for
we want not, (if we looke well
about us) those that at this day,
are in like manner tempted, the
temptor having tried this bait
and found it to enshate so many
makes use of it still, and ever
will, because of the prevailing
experience of the same. Doth
he not come upon Gods people
now, and (in like manner) up-
braid

braid *God* to them, and them to
 themselves, hoping to make
 them weary of the way of *God*
 and to encline to his course
 what (saith he to a persecuted
 and afflicted *Christian*) is this
 the *God* you thus magnifie, for
 infinite *wisdom*, *power*, *provi-*
dence, *kindnes*, *love*, *mercy*, and
favour, that in all these he is ad-
 mirably, yea incomprehensible? &
 are you those redeemed, and be-
 loved ones, for whom all this
 (and I know not what more) is
 reserved? are you his *sons*, *daugh-*
ters, his deare *spouse*, yea neere
 as his owne *members*? if it pos-
 sible, he should be thus good, &
 you in so ill case, and others
 whom he makes you beleeve he
 abhors, and neglects, to enjoy
 the common mercies which
 you want? How can this stand
 either with *his mercy*, or *your*
piety? with his good promises or
 your godly practises? it cannot
 be but either he must not be the
God you make account off; or
 you

em to not the men you imagine
make our selves to be; certainly ei-
God for his goodnes, or yours must
urfe ile, seeing so it is, that you are
cuted worse case then they that are
s this arke naught; were he such a
e, for God, or you such men, as is sup-
rovi osed, it would be otherwise
, and then it is, both with you and
s ad with these wicked ones, they
le? & should have lesse prosperity, and
l be you more happines, you should
this be in better condition, and they
e) is worse.

ugh And if he have but brought
ecres to make question either of
of Gods goodnes, or our owne, he
d, & hath enough, to make us wholly
er miserable; in suspecting both
he the goodnes of Gods nature, and
joy of our owne grace, because he
ich well knowes the Lord cannot
nd endure, but doth abhor, both his
ur own, & his childrens state to be
or mistrusted, in as much, as (be-
or sides, the detestable dishonour
ne offered to his own most glorious
or Maity, to be brought under the
u distrust

and jealousie of his creature, if he were not that he seeme to be) the *Devill* is herein glorified, and his limmes are applauded, and the gracious Saints and sonnes of the most high condemned, as if those who by the Word of God seeme to be his *best* beloved, (in regard of the many glorious things that are spoken of them) should (by his worke) appeare to be most neglected, (in regard of the many grievous things that lye upon them) and on the other side, such as are laden with many terrible threatnings in the Scriptures, should confound all that is therein denounced against them, by the perpetual experience of a prosperous condition for the greatest part of their dayes.

And this was the thing about which *Iobs* friends lay at him so hard from day to day, and would have had him given up all, and granted himselfe an hypocrite,

hypocrite, being perswaded
 themselves, and doing their best
 perswade him, that it was an
 absolute impossibility, and a
 thing simply incompatible.

*Both with Gods justice and
 mercy,*

*And with Iobs religion, and
 piety.*

That he who was (by Gods
 vne mouth once and againe)
 commended to be the best,
 (one of them) in the world for
 goodnesse, should become the
 woefull spectacle of the whole
 world for extraordinary evill of
 affliction and distresse. But *Iob*
 himselfe was wonderfull hap-
 py in this passage, and knew
 well how it was with him be-
 fore the Lord, and all that they
 could urge, did not make him
 part a *haire* from his integrity;
 hence he calls them miserable
 Comforters, and *Physitians* of
 no value; and comforts him-
 selfe with that assurance which
 his soule did finde in the un-
 doubted

ter in the *depth* of their misery, then the men of the world in their *highest straine*, and *greatest streame* of prosperity. And were our understandings so enlightened herein, that we could be stedfastly letted in the infallible perswasion hereof, this prevailing plea of the *Temptor*, would prove a meere nullity, a very vanity, and we should be able not onely to endure, or hold out, in such a hard time, as we cannot shun (as divers of Gods deare children have done) but with *Moses*, rather make choise of such a meane state, & forsake a better, to approve our obedience, then to dwell in the *Tent* and enjoy the delights of the ungodly, upon *such tearmes*, ordinarily their *tenure* is taken and holden, (betweene the *Devell* & them) here in this world.

Let no mans temporall condition then, be the least occasion to call his spirituall, or eternall state into question.

doubted evidence of his eternal happines, which the eye of his faith could clearely, and comfortably discerne, through the thickest of his present calamity and tribulation.

He well knew (which we must all learne, and labour to know) that our present estate in this world is no good glasse, or spectacle to looke through, and to represent a child of God *so* to us, as the Lord lookes upon him and as before the Lord we must esteeme him; no, nothing is more deceivable, & lesse to be trusted, then the *visible* condition of any man, in respect of his *Temporalities*, which may flow y^e a overflow, to the most prophane, and fall, and ebbe, even a dry, to the last drop, from the *beires of heaven*, as most usually they doe; and though they doe, yet are they much more happy when they are wholly empty, then the other can be in their most abundant fulnes, and better

be it farre from every faithfull man to judge according to such outward and uncertaine appearance, *God* never built his goodnesse to us, nor our happinesse before him, upon such *sand*, which will *swell*, and *sinke*, upon the shift of every *wind*, and surges of every *tyde*, the foundation of his love is more firme and unmoveable. And know, there is no happinesse in the whole earth, good enough to be the *least token* of his *true* love, nor any earthly evill under heaven, bad enough (even at the worst) to distemper the hearts of his Elect, in the least, yea though all the poyson and malignity thereof, were possible to be emptied upon one man. He that hath assured us that our *worst*, doth exceed the *best* of other men, would have us hearten our selves, and solace our soules herein, knowing that the true weight of this most worthy truth,

Note.

will overpoyze & beare downe
all temporary affliction that
hangeth on, or presseth downe
in this present evill world.

Be it graunted, (*for it cannot
be denied*) that the *worst* end of
the staffe is in the hand of Gods
people, and that it is *ill* with
them, when worse men fare
well, let the devill have thus
much yelded. if he will dispute
the case; (*truth* is able to give
error some advantage, and yet
conquer too) well, what will he
hereupon inferre? what shall
be his forced and infernall Con-
clusion of this our free concessi-
on? Why this, that Gods peo-
ple are in worse case then wic-
ked men; well, be it so, and
what of that? Say, they are,
will any thing follow to their
true discomfort, whose soules
the Lord would not have made
sad? if any thing more then this
let the devill say his *worst*, and
produce, and presse it, to the
utmost, but if this be all, all is

D nothing:

nothing: Satan is confounded, we are confirmed, wicked men are befool'd, in all this; for why? though (in some earthly, and temporary sence) we may say, our case may be *worse* then theirs, and theirs *better* then ours, yet God hath given us to know, that in spirituall and heavenly consideration, our *worst* is better then their *best*, & this Proposition we doe, and dare avouch, in the face of our fiercest adversary the divell, or the most furious of those tyrants which he provoketh against us; who thought to inferre some hydeous and hopeles consequence out of these poore premisses, whereas nothing can issue from our perplexity, and their peace, by any sound evidence, but that which will be.

*Glorious to the Lord,
Joyous to his people,
Grievous to the ungodly, and*

Mischie.

*Mischievous to the devil
himselfe.*

Who observing us thus *com-
pletely* armed, against his might-
iest engine, must now, either
with shame give over his old
trade of tempting, or *with sor-
row* give over his idle hope of
prevailing, and begin to thinke
himselfe lesse able to conquer
us, and every child of God
(who hath this hope) to be *more
then a Conqueror* through Christ
who hath loved them, and in
his love made thus much
knowne unto them, to make
them *heartty*, in their *hardest*
estate.

Rom 8.37

And now (Beloved) is
the accuser of our brethren (and
of our selves) cast out, and
overcome; we have *wone*,
he is *downe*, for at the *lowest*,
he sees that we know our selves
to be farre above all his
limmes, even all the *highest*,
and *happiest*, they can be in:
and seeing he perceives that

Rev 12.10

we now understand this truth, what hope hath he to make us by any meanes *miserable*, seeing we can beleeve that we are more happy then any of his can be, in our greatest *mifery*.

And that we may be the better enabled in ourselves to over-bear him, let us descend from the generall notice hereof, unto those particular instances of all kindes of evill whereunto we are incident, and we shall finde true cause triumphantly to out-face him in every of them, from one to another, as we may have occasion to enquire into them in order.

Put the case where you please, may let *Satan* have leave (if you will) to partieu'ate where he will, in those miseries, which he imagines may be most for his advantage, and our damage: whether poverty, or captivity, or infamy, or tyranny, or death it selfe; we shall sufficiently solve

our

our selves, and *silence* him, in each of these.

Let us looke a little into them severally: Is not the *Poverty* of a child of *God* better then the *wealth* of the wicked? Let *Lazarus* and *Dives* be the men that shall decide the matter; I dare say you have read, and heard of them *both*, in *Gods Booke*; the *one* is described by his penury and want, the *other* by his superfluity and abundance: the *one* fared deliciously every day, and was sumptuously arrayed in purple and fine linnen; the *other* had but rags (and scarce them) to cover him, and desired but the *offall* or *reliquies* of the rich mans table to refresh his hungry *body*, and to fill his empty *belly*. Now, (I pray you) which of these *two*, was in the better case, and which of their two conditions would you chuse, all things considered? I suppose no man that hath heard *all the truth* that is

Poverty.

Pfal. 37. 16
Pro 15. 16
Cap. 16. 8.

told of them both, but he had much rather be, in *Lazarus* poore state; then have the riches of the other, and so the poverty of Gods child, is happier then the ungodly mans abundance; and that which was here but *Parabolically* propounded, under these two persons, will be found *really true* betweene any two in the world, in their condition. *Better is a little (saith David, first, and Salomon once and againe.) than the righteous bath, then the pknny and store of a wicked man, nay, of many wicked men.)* Our least doth much exceede their most, in every respect, whether of *money, meate, apparell, or whatsoever.*

Imprisonment.

Againe, is not our *restraint* and *imprisonment*, better then their *liberty* and *freedom*? Let Gods childe be the prisoner, & the impious person be free at pleasure; a *prison* will be found happier to him, then a *pallace* to the
the

the other. It may soone be tried
betweene *Peter*, and *Herod*, the
one was in hard restraint, even
in chaines, the other might goe
where he would; yet (I warrant
you) he that reades the story of
these two, and counts the *mid-
dle and both ends*, would rather
be *Peter* in the loathsome dun-
geon, then *Herod* in the highest
admiration. Base vermine de-
vour *Herod* in all his pompe,
magnificence; and roalty: the
Angell of *God* guards *Peter* in re-
straint, and brings him out mi-
raculously, and joyfully; & this
is left recorded of *God* to com-
fort us (inasmuch as nothing is
more against nature, then to be
caged up, and kept in) that we
might know, that our *God* can
make that *restraint* more hap-
py to his, then another mans
enlargment can be to him. The
Bird that is kept in a cage is
safe, and well provided for, of
all things meete to make him
sing, but the *Vulture*, and *Kyte*,

Acts 12.

often prey upon those that fly in the open firmament of heaven.

Captivity.

Nay, say it come to *captivity*, (which is a straine of extraordinary restraint) put case *Gods child* be taken captive, and kept in slavery, and that *Gods enemy* be the party in authority to detaine him there, and to tyrannize over him in a strange Land: I make no question but the *captivity* of *Gods* people, shall be found to be a condition more truly comfortable, then another mans *eminency*, yea *soveraignity*, though he were the King of that Countrey wherein they are kept in bondage. *Daniell* and *Nebuchadnezzar* shall decide it, the one (*viz. Daniell*) was the *captive*, the other was the *King*, let any man say (who hath considered what is said of them both) which of the *two* he would chuse to be: Surely, if the oddes had not bin extraordinary,

dinary, in the comparison, and proportion of these estates, *Moses* had made no good match, in leaving to be a *Courtier* to become a *captive*; but he well knew that the meanest and most oppressed *Israelite* in *Egypt*, was more happy then that mighty *Monarch*, that kept them under. *Soveraignty* in a *Pagan*, is not comparable to *slavery* in a *Christián*. Let God give sentence by his revealed word, and it will be apparent to be a truth undeniable and undoubted. A *throne*, and a *crowne* cannot be so good to another, as a *cottage*, yea, a *dunghill* to those that are the *Lords*.

Againe, is not our *persecution* better then their *pleasure*? and are not our very *distresses*, beyond their *delights*? I thinke the *three children* in the fiery *fornace*, will soone satisfie us for that, for they were in more comfortable plight in the midst of these *fiercest flames*, then he
was.

Persecution.

Dan. 3.

was who cast them in; and that the tyrant himselfe is forced to confesse, and also maketh decrees to confirme the same unto others, that out of his mouth all men may know the power and favour of the Lord to his owne, in sweetning their extreamest bitternes; and his wrath and vengeance against all ungodly ones, in envenoming & poisoning their greatest sweetnes. God hath many precious comforts for the *persecuted*, but nothing but curses and plagues for *persecutors*. The very in'amy and reproach, of such as suffer for the truth, doth surpasse the honour and reputation of those that cast contempt upon them; for the Lord doth *renowne* the one, and *renounce* the other: Men fawn upon mighty tyrants with *glorious titles*, but God doth frowne upon them as base and ignominious persons. How many pages of his sacred booke are perfumed, with the odour of

of their *sweete names*, who have
 beene disgraced for God? and
 how many stories doe record
 the *rotten*, and *stinking* memo-
 ry of their oppressors? the one
 goe for glorious *martyrs*, the
 other for egregious and defa-
 med *malefactors*. And this
 made some who mockt the *A-*
postles at the first, when they
 had *afterward* better bethought
 themselves, they left mocking,
 and became *Disciples*; they gave
 over reproaching, and fell to
professing the Gospel; and they
 had no reason thus to doe, had
 they not knowne that it had
 bin more excellent to have bin
 an *infamous Christian*, then an
honourable Infidell.

Acts 2.

But passing over all these,
 and supposing to the *worst* that
 can come, (if the *worst* doe
 come to the *worst*) if men
 must *resist to blood*, and that
Death must end all the fore-
 said afflictions, of pover-
 ty, imprisonment, captivity,
 per-

Heb. 12. 4.

persecution, infamy, and whatsoever can be endured in this life. Is not our *Death*, better then their *life*? yea, God hath said it, as it may appeare in that which he hath enforced from the mouth of a most wicked man to witnesse it. What say you to *Balaams* wish, (and that upon his best thoughts) when he had but the taste, and seene (as yet) but the glymps of the happines, and glory of Gods people? even *Balaam*, who came of purpose to curse and maligne them, and therefore, (unto him) it may well be thought, the life of Gods people was as bad, as a death, and worthy of his utmost execration; yet no sooner had God shined a little upon him, onely with some little *light*, [without all *life*] of this truth; but the man is more in love with the *death* of the righteous, then with his owne *life*, and would gladly cease to *live* as he did, to
dye

dye as they doe; his wish shewes enough to make this good with advantage, how earnestly doth he utter it? *Let my soule dye the death of the righteous, let my last end be like unto his,* and no man in common sence can wish any thing but that which either is *indeede*, or in his apprehension for his owne well-fare. Moreover, how many singular respects are there whrein, the *death* of Gods child is to be preferred to the *life* of a wicked man?

Our death is precious;

Their death is vile:

Our death desireable;

Their life abominable.

Thus in the *last enemy* which is death, we overgoe the ungodly, and are (or ought to be) so farre from changing *lives* with them, that we will not give *our death* (which is the *worst* that can befall us in this world) for *their life*, which is the *only darling* they desire beyond

Num. 23.
10.

Psal. 116.
15.
Psal. 15.4.
Phil. 1.23.
2 Pet. 2.10
1 Cor. 15

beyond all other, to enjoy up-
on the earth.

And so we have seene in all
these particulars severally, how
the oddes is ours in all respects,
ther's more to be got by our
greatest evils, then by all their
best good, instance where you
will, its evident, in every thing
which can be named, or con-
ceited.

I will now speake but once
more; and that shall be of all,
and every of our evils *summ'd*
up together, and gathered into
a *total*, that as in the *Items* be-
fore, so now in them all at once
it may appeare, that the whole
masse of our misery, or the
greatest measure thereof, that
can be *powred in*, *pressed downe*,
even till it runne over upon us,
is more happy, and much bet-
ter, then all the good things,
that can be cast upon wicked
persons, yea though the whole
world should empty all her ful-
nes, and excellency, to give
them

them the *largest* contentment,
that could be wished.

And we will give you sufficient security for the truth herof, in one that is beyond all exception, to wit, *Iesus Christ*, who was a man of sorrowes, a mirrour of miseries, in whom all kinde of calamity did combine, and settled it selfe upoa his sacred person, (considering as he was man) seizing both upon soule and body at once, and in inexpressible manner upon both, and either. It would be too tedious to particulate those severall passions which he felt, neither indeede is it more possible for us to *declare them*, then to *endure them*; How was he handled, and humbled, of *God*, of *men*, of *devells*.

Of God, in justice, seeing he suffered in mans stead.

Of men, in malice, being instigated by the devell.

Of the devell, in outrage, being permitted.

permitted of God to afflict him.

The *severity* of Gods law, the *extremity* of mans cruelty, the utmost of the divells tyranny, was exercised upon him; betweene these three he carried at once the *vengeance* of heaven, the *malignity* of the earth, and the *dispite* of hell, all these *envenomed vyaks* being full of his fathers teircest wrath, and most dreadfull indignation even to the loathsome lees, and poisonous dregs, were powred upon his precious soule and body, so that he was all over dienchte into the most wofull condition that a creature could be, as carrying the malediction of the most mighty God, and that whole curse, which was due, (*by divine law*) to man-kindes corrupt nature in the elect.

Now take him at the very worst, and utmost of all this evill, imagine him as betrayed by

by *Iudas*, apprehended by the *High Preists* servants, pinnioned, and arraigned before *Pilate*, and there reproached, blindfolded, buffeted, and every way most barbarously abused, with thornes, rods, and whatsoever could be done to his ignominy, and misery, follow him from thence to his *Crosse* and thinke what he endured there, in sight of all men, besides the *unseene sufferings* of his soule, before in the garden, and now againe, which made him fill the firmament of heaven with strong, and strange cries, as being *simply* insufferable to a meere creature, (without the utter destruction of the same) unlesse it had a *Diety* to support it. And in this basest, bitterest, and most heavy condition, set by him some one among the sons of the *mighty*, and conceit *that man* in a compleate contrariety to all this, put upon him all the pompe,
plea-

pleasure, principallity, power, honour, and whatsoever heart would have; *dignifie* him with the dominion of the whole world, and let all the Crownes under heaven be brought into one, and set upon his head, nay, *desifie* him (as *Herod* would have beene) and make him the onely MONARCH of *mankinde* and that nothing may be wanting to his absolute welfare in a temporary, and terrenall estate, let all *mines* yeeld him *treasure*, all fruits give him *pleasure*, yea thinke him as much more happy above all men, as *Christ* was more miserable then any man. And when these *two* shall stand together (thus) in thy thoughts say which of the *two* thou judgest in better case, and in whichers state thou wouldst chuse to stand; either in *Christs* at the worst, or this mans at the best. I make no question but every true Christian would quickly determine the case, and

and make his choise, and none but the *Atheist*, or *Infidell*, would take any part with the other. Why then? is it not plaine that the greatest heape of most heavy unhappines, being piled up together, and throwne upon the person of a child of God, is more light, and easie to beare, beyond all comparison, then *mountaines*, or *mines*, yea, or whole *worlds* of wealth, and whatsoever else of the best things, that can be either devised, or desired, to fill the sensuall heart of sinfull man. These *two* then, (thus considered) doe cleare the case, and make our comfort unquestionable, that all our evill exceedeth all their good, & that therefore, though the Lord, doe please to lay his heavy hand upon his owne, and to let those prophane ones goe free, and untouched, and so to seeme to be in better case then wee, yet now we see not onely by profe

of

of evidence, but also by powerfull experience, that the worst we have, is better then the best; our *miseries* are beyond their *mercies*, yea, our *hell*, exceeds their *heaven*, and so they *fillily* insult over us, but we *justly* over them; and *Satan* is but a foole to turmoile us with these perplexed thoughts, of the wel- being of his vassals, & our ill condition, unlesse he could overturne, and take away the ground of this glorious truth, which overturnes him, and makes us to glory and triumph in our most grievous tribulations, under the blessed hope of much present, and of infinite and everlasting felicity to come to us, for ever and ever, in due time.

And beloved, upon these premisses (*thus considered*) we ought to be so farre from wondering at our *miseries*, that we should rather turne all our admiration upon our selves, and begin

begin to wonder at our owne
weakenes, ignorance, and in-
fidelity, and to bewaile our
wonderfull want of faith in this
heavenly truth; which if it
were well belceved, and appli-
ed of us, might and would, be
so farre from encreasing our
cares, that it would rather cause
us to (*account it exceeding joy*
when we fall into many tribulati-
ons) and instead of blessing un-
godly men in our thoughts, at
their *best*, we would blesse God
for the basest, and most dejected
state whereinto it should please
him to suffer them to cast us:
did we know all, we would
soone be weary of their *welfare*,
and most willing to undergoe
that condition which is repu-
ted most wretched and wofull.

Shall we lanch a little further
into the deepe, and discover the
rich, rare, and hidden treasures
of this heavenly truth? that by
our knowledge of them, we
may truly finde, that (*as our*
affli-

James i. 2.

2 Cor. i. 5

afflictions doe abound for Christ,
our consolations should abound,
(yea superabound) much more,
by Christ, and also, that the fur-
ther we wade in the particulars
of our woe, we shall still descry
more abundance of blessed joy,
and therein we may swim and
bath our selves, in our greatest
bitternes, and by it, be sweete-
ly saved from sinking in that sea
of sorrow and distresse, where-
in so many doe most miserably
(as in a bottomlesse gulfe)
drowne and over-whelme
themselves irrecoverably. Assu-
redly if we come to survey the
happy, and worthy, differences
of our worst estate, and their
best, and what singular and sur-
passing advantages we have of
them every way; we should (at
once) gather both much abun-
dant assurance of this truth, and
also evidence of incomparable
comfort from the same: inas-
much as it will undeniably ap-
peare, that in our heaviest estate,
our

our state is so *heavenly*, as may, and will, (being rightly ballanced) wholly over-bear all discomforts that can come upon us; and teach us to *trample* tribulation under our feet, as a thing more fit for our holy contempt and scorne, then for our carnall care or feare.

Let us then make our approach, and draw neere to some *few*, of those *innumerable* particulars, which we might readily produce; instancing in such only, as for evidence are most *unquestionable*, & for consequence most *comfortable*. And the neerer we come, the more will our joy arise, and encrease upon us, by the bright beames of that blessed and celestiall *light*, that shineth from heaven so gloriously, in every severall difference and advantage betwene their best, and our worst estate. For (you must know,) that as the difference, so the advantage,

2 Cor. 15
be-

betweene our condition and theirs, is exceeding grear, and beyond all dimension, yet we will aime and guesse, as we are able, to unfold such as we shall finde most plaine, and most plentiful to our purpose in hand. To come to them then: The first is this.

I Advantage.

1. *A child of God is blessed in his worst estate, and an ungodly man is accursed in his best.*

Can there be a wider difference, or a worthier advantage then this? the difference betweenethings *blessed* and *cur-
sed* of God, is the most that may be, for God makes these *two*, the utmost extreames, both of all *naturall*, *spirituall*, and *eternall* good, and evill, and the advantage is the same with the difference, that is to say, as much as can be uttered or expressed: but let us trie the truth hereof in this particular, whereof we speake.

And that we may soone doe,
for

for we have a most sure word
of our Lord and Saviour *Iesus*
Christ to secure our soules of
the same, Looke we into that
part of his owne most excellent
sermon which we finde *Luke 6.*
where he bringeth in, both the
righteous, and the sinner, and
presenteth either of them unto
us, in their owne habite.

Luke 6.

The godly at the worst, ver.
20. 21. 22. 23.

The ungodly at the best, ver.
24. 25. 26.

The former (*viz.* the faith-
full) are considered in their *Po-*
verty, *Hunger*, *Sorrow*, and
Contempt, but they are blessed
in them all: no Poverty but
blessed, [*Blessed be ye poore,*
ver. 20.] no Hunger but bles-
sed, (*Blessed be ye that hunger,*
ver. 21.) no Sorrow but bles-
sed, (*Blessed be ye that mourne,*
ver. 21.) no contempt but bles-
sed, (*Blessed are ye when men re-*
vile you &c. ver. 22. 23.) And
(beloved) are not they a blessed
E people

Rom. I. 15

People, and their state blessed every way, whose very crosses, yea curses (as the world accounts them) are blessed? Can they want any thing to make them infinitely blessed, who see very want of some blessings is so blessed to them? Had not he (who is God to be blessed for ever) preached this point, who could have consented, and set to his scale that it had beene true? but himselfe was hungry, and blessed; poore, sorrowfull, contemptible, and blessed in all these he spake what himselfe in our nature did feelee, and what his members (partakers of his nature) by grace should feelee; to wit, that if the world and the divell will keepe them every way perplexed; he will ever keepe them (as God his father kept him) happy and blessed. If they must be poore, and hungry, grieved, and defamed, it shall be.

Blessed hunger,

Blessed poverty,

Blessed

*Blessed reproach, and
Blessed grieve,*

doe the world and the Divell
what they can, when they have
done their *worst* to Gods chil-
dren, the *worst* they can doe,
shall be well, and happy to them

The latter viz. the prophane
they, on the other side are set
out to the *utmost*, the *most* is
made of them that can be, we
have them brought in ruffling in
their *Riches, Society, lollery, and
Honour*, but they are wofull in
all these: no wealth but wofull,
[*woe be to you that are rich. ver.
24.*] no fulnes but wofull, [*woe
be to you that are full, ver. 25.*]
no mirth but wofull, [*woe be to
you that laugh, ver. 25.*] no hos-
nour, but wofull, [*woe be to you
when men applaud you, ver. 26.*]
And are not they a wofull peo-
ple, to whom all *wealth and
welfare* is wofull whose very
comforts and *blessings* (as the
world accounts them) are *accurs-
sed*? Can they want any thing to

make them infinitely miserable, whose very *mercies* are *miseries* to them? The Lord hath entailed an eternall *woe*, to all those things wherein they place their *welfare*. Their *blessings* and Gods *curse*, cannot be severed, they are simply inseparable, and shall so cleave unto each other for ever, that as they can have no joy in any happines appertaining to others so they shall have none, in that which they possesse *themselves*; but whensoever they reade, or heare any thing, out of Gods booke touching any temporall benefit comming towards them, it must be understood *with a vengeance* adhering to it, (so farre as their part goeth in it) before they shall enjoy it.

Now what a *mercy* is it, to have every *bitter* thing *sweetened*, every *evill* *blessed*? And what a *misery* is it to have every *sweete* thing *poysoned*, every *good* thing *accursed*?

This

This is our *first* advantage, and the odds standing upon these termes, of an *evill* state *blessed*, and a *good* condition *accursed*; every *idiot* wou'd soone determine which of the two, to chuse; Is not a *good* estate to be desired on any tearmes, and a *bad*, on none? I thinke every man would be glad of a *blessing* upon any condition, and entertain a *curse*, upon none. And now judge (I pray you) betwene *Saints*, and *sinners*, which of both are in better case, how soever it stand with either of them, in the *best* the one may have, and the *worst* that can befall the other; and according to this apparent evidence, give upright sentence, whether the *most unhappy* among the children of God, be not in more happy case, then the *most happy* among the children of this world.

And thus farre concerning our *first* advantage. The *second* is this.

2. Advantage:

2. A childe of God at his worst, hath no true, or reall evill upon him, but onely the appearance, or outside of the same. A wicked man at his best, hath nothing but that which seemeth to be good, and is indeede evill.

And this advantage is most evident on either part, and undeniable in both. For first, for the child of God, he hath his part and interest in Christ, who having taken part of all the evils incident to the elect, hath by his own suffering & enduring of them; deprived them of their venom and poyson, pulled out their sting, and abolished whatsoever was truly evill in them, and sanctified them so, as that he alone did beare them as crosses, we (at the most, and the worst) doe undergoe them onely as crosses; unto him, they were as just punishments for us, unto us, they are nothing but mercifull chastisements: they were due to him (in our nature)

ture) by law, and became part of the *malediction* thereof; they come to us, onely as tokens of kindness and love, so faith the spirit of God once & againe.

Again, for the ungodly man, he is miserably gul'd, and cosned as concerning his condition, having some things which seeme to be good, but being well sifted, and searched into, are found to be nothing but *re- all evils*. For why? we know, sinne and rebellion did not onely bring in *plagues, wants, and miseries*; but also it brought *mischiefe, and rottennes, and wretchednes*, upon the good things God created for us, and made them evill to us, not in their privation alone, but even in our possession of them also, as was noted in the former advantage. Now this curſe that by sinne cleaveth to the blessings of God; is (as was also aforesaid) inseparable, to the sinner; because his sinne

Pro. 3. 13.
Heb. 12.
10.

is not remooved from him or satisfied for him, by *Christ*, unto God, in whom, he himselfe having no part or portion, but remaining under the power and rage of *sinne*, and right and possession of *Satan*, so doe also, all those things likewise which he doth enjoy, remaine under the malediction of *Almighty God*, and in them, he is as much deceived as he is in *himselfe*, who though he seeme to be, (at least to himselfe) *as good as any*, yea, *it may be better*; (in his owne conceit) then the best of the Lords beloved ones; is yet, but a *limme* of *Satan*, an impe of hell, and no such man as he made account he was. So that himselfe is *no such person*, and all he hath, are *no such things*, as they are conceited to be, being reputed good, but discovered to be starke naught. Looke what we are before the Lord, such are all things to us which we

Note:

we have, they can be no other in his sight.

But shall we heare the *Holy Ghost* speake in this point, and that from them (or rather in them) whose experience doth actually justifie that which we doe avouch. Looke (I pray) and observe, yea admire the Apostle *Pauls* evidence in this particular, he was a man that had tried the *worst* that could be endured, and the *worst* (he saith) of that he felt, is onely *this*, that it onely seemed to be worse then indeede it was found to be; nay, (on the contrary,) that it was but a *shadow* of e-
yill, and a meere appearance thereof, without any substance, or reall sence of the same at all.

Take we notice of his words, as we finde them, and we shall see this point imprignable: he speakes (purposely) of his miseries, persecutions, and distresses, of all sorts, and in them all, what saith he? why even this, that

2 Cor 6.8.
9. 10. 11.

that the worst of them were not the things themselves they seemed to be, but onely some shewes, or outsidcs of them: their sorrow was no more but this, [*As sorrowing and yet alwayes rejoycing*] their poverty but this, [*As being poore, yet making many rich*] their want but thus, [*As having nothing, yet possessing all things*] and so of the rest, insomuch, that he breakes out most affectionatly, ver. 11. *O Corinthians, &c.* As if he should say, Oh deare Christians! if you did but know how well it is with us at our worst, how the Lord doth grossely infatuate the Divell, and befoole wicked men, in suffering them to conceit how unhappy we are through the evils they cast upon us; and how he doth graciously comfort us, in taking away the evil, of all these evils from us, so as that, we are nothing so afflicted, or distressed, as they dreame us to be, but (on the
the

the quite contrary) we are chea-
 red, comforted, and encoura-
 ged, that we can, and doe re-
 joyce exceedingly, in the utmost
 extremities of all, that they are
 able by might, or malice, to
 inflict upon us: if this were but
 knowne to you as it is felt of us
 you would rejoyce together
 with us, and be perswaded (as
 we are) that no more misery
 can come to a true *Christian* for
 the profession of Religion, then
 may remaine, and well consort
 with all the joy, peace, solace,
 and happinesse, which heart
 can wish. And in this dec'arati-
 on the Lord hath en'larged our
 hearts to tell you *that truth*
 which the world cannot receive
 nor beleeve; to wit, that the
 worst we can endure, may con-
 sist, with the *best* we can desire.
 The *mischiefes* men bring upon
 us, of sorrow, want, &c. are *Pi-
 ctures* or *Images* of these things;
 but the joy, fulnes. &c. the Lord
 gives in the midst of them all,
 are

are true and reall, sound and substantiall consolations.

But how on the other side, for the ungodly, it is not so with them: all their good things are evils indeede, how good soever they seemed to be. Have we not shewed them to be all in the generall denounced as curses to them, from Gods owne mouth, *Deut. 28.* And if we come to particulars, will not every severall blessing, proove a curse unto them, upon due search?

Pro 14. 13.

They have *mirth*, but such as (in the midst whereof the heart is heavy,) & doe they not droope many times inwardly, when outwardly they are frolike and joviall? God saith they doe, and some of them have shewed it to be too true; it is but *mock-mirth* they have, lent them by *Satan*, to delude them a little while, & to be taken from them by God, at a moments warning, whensoever he shall but offer
to

to frowne upon them in the least.

They have *wealth*, (and the world sayes, that they who have that, have the blessing of God) but what is their wealth? *Semingly good*, yea that which makes them the best men, in mens judgment: but if you will be judged by God, who hath spoken it, he calls it by so many *odious Epithets*, as must needs perswade any man that it is nothing lffe then *good indeede*: take a few for a taste, is it not called.

Hurtfull, Ecc'e. 5. 12.

Deceitfull, Mat. 13. 22.

Dangerous, 1 Tim. 6. 17.

Filthy lucre, 1 Pet. 5. 2.

Vnrightheous mammon,
Luke 16.

With a multitude more of most *loathsome* appellations to the same purpose, by any one of which, nothing that is *truely good*, was ever entituled.

And what we say of their
wealth,

wealth, and mirth, might be said of the honour, and pleasure, of these men, and of all their contentments whatsoever; all and every of which, upon true and serious inquisition, would be found no such matters, as they are made account to be, in the weake imaginations of wicked men; but things, quite contrary to the great opinion they have of them.

Now what a wide difference, and what a worthy advantage is here? That a childe of Gods worst, is but seeming evill, and true good, and an ungodly mans best, is but seeming good, and true evill? Surely a little deliberation would serve, to a full resolution of any mans choice of these two, which he would have whether the former condition, or the latter. And this is our second advantage. The third followeth. And that is this.

3. Advan-
tage.

3. That the soule of a childe of God is safe, in the worst estate he

can

can be in, in this life; but a wicked mans soule is in most danger when his estate is at best.

Let the Lord speake for both; out of his blessed Word, we know he will not, nay; cannot but say true for either side. For the faithfull & their safety first. Christ foretels *Peter* of as much misery as might befall him, when he signifies unto him, that (*Satan had a desire to winnow him* (with the rest) *as wheate*) that is, throughly, exactly, to the utmost; by which wordes he meant to give *Peter* to understand what miseries he was like (for the truths sake) to undergoe, and how it came to passe accordingly, by Gods permission of the *Devill*, and the power, and malice of his adherents, the story of his denial before *Christ's* death; and the relation of his life, and death, in the booke of the *Acts of the Apostles*, doth abundantly evidence, and cleare.

But

Luk. 22.
31.

Vers. 32.

But wherewith did *Christ* comfort *Peter*, when he told him of this outward discomfort and danger? why even with this very thing, (*But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith faile not*) which was as much as to say; though many persecutions, and perills may surprize thee, to the endangering of thy life, even unto the death, yet know, thy soules state shall be secured, the power of grace in thee, the assurance of glory to thee, shall in no wise faile, that shall stand fast forever, whatsoever becometh of thy temporall part, which will perish.

Ioh. 10.

And not to *Peter* alone, was thus much spoken, but our *Lord Iesus Christ* said as much to all that are of upright hearts, when he spake that Parable of the Shephard and the Sheepe, whereof we read in the Gospel. He compares himselfe to the good Shephard, and his Saints to his Sheepe: now because

cause no creatures doe more miscarry through the violence, cruelty, and outrage, of devouring beasts, then *sheepe* doe, and none are in so much danger to be torne in pieces as they, and no *sheepe* that men have, are in halfe the danger that *Christs sheepe* are; *Christ* doth of purpose provide, to prevent (I say not the danger it selfe, as if he meant, that uer, *Wolfe*, or *Beare*, should come neere his fold, but) that *fear*, that might follow the danger, whereunto they are incident, saying (*my Father who gave them to me is greater then all, and none can take them out of my Fathers hand*) As if he should tell them, it were very possible, easie, and ordinary for tyrants to breake into the fold, and fetch away a *sheepe*, or two, and scatter (if not deuoure) a whole flocke; but saith *Christ* though your fleeces shou'd be shorne, yea though your flesh should be

torne

Vers. 26.

Pfal. 73.
23. 24.

torne, and you taken from *house to house*, yea from the earth; yet know, that your *best* part is *safest*, your soules shall none be able to touch, or take out of my Fathers hand, who holdeth you fast, and will not let you goe from himselfe, upon any tearmes; but will (*hold you by his right hand, and guide you by his counsell, and afterwards bring you to glory,*) though it may be through the *Butchers* hands,

And the Apostle *Peter* himselfe tells us, (it may well be out of the happy experience, of the feeling of that which *Christ* said to himselfe before) that the Saints of God in those times did rejoyce and that in the midst of many heavy temptations with joy *unspeakable and glorious*, because they were secured touching their soules estate of that immortall, and never fading inheritance, which was reserved for them *through the favour of God*, in the heavens

vens, and they preserved
through the power of God unto
 it. In some *uncomfortable* hea-
 vines they were, because of
 their present afflictions, but
 the joy they felt by this blessed
 assurance of their soules estate,
 was so much, that it was *un-
 speakable.*

But now for the ungodly
 and the sinner, on the other
 side, the case is altered with
them in this thing; his body and
 state, may be both very secure,
 and every thing may goe with
 him, as he would have it,
 he may be planted, and
 rooted, and grow rancke
 and encrease mightily, in
 all contentments to the de-
 sire of his heart, but in the
 meane while, though all
 his externall things seeme to be
 built on the rocke, yet his
 soules estate is founded on the
 sand, and that so loosely, that
 every puffle of winde, every
 wave of water, beares it downe,
 by

by reason of the perpetuall perill wherein it is.

1 Pet. 4. 6.

We have too many witnesses of this wofull truth: *A whole world* fell at onco, when they thought themselves firme, and fall in the dayes of *Noah*; neither were the bodies of them all neerer drowning, then the soules I will not say of all, for the Apostle seems to me, to cōtrole it, but of the most of them were to *damnation*.

Esa. 5. 15.

The Prophet *Isaiah*, brings in a merry crew of such as neither cared for, nor feared, any thing, but passed their time with merriment and musicke, and so exceeded in jollity as it past: but on a suddaine, the next newes we heare of these good fellowes, is that *Hell* had enlarged it selfe, and opened her mouth without measure to receive them, as if hell were hungry for them, and could not be satisfied till it had them; and are not they in most danger, af-

ter

ter whom hell is thus eager ?

The *rich glutton* in the Gospel, was so well lin'd, and growne so warme in his wooll, having inn'd all his corne, enlarged every barne, and brought all things so about, that now he was at hearts ease, and could let himselfe a lease for many yeares of peace, safety, fulnes, and all kinde of contentment; as if he thought, that not a man among a thousand was beter under-laid then himselfe, and that, as *David once dream'd*, his rocke was made so strong, that there had beene no stirring of it; alas, what plight was his soule in, all this while? No sooner had he breathed out the words that argued his conceited *safety*, but instantly another voice was heard from heaven, a voice *dolefull, heavy, and terrible*, arguing his *dangerous*, nay, his *desperate*, nay, his *damm'd* estate, now imminent, and hanging over his head, and immediately

diatly to be executed upon him, *thou foole this night shall they take away thy soule*, was ever man neerer mischeife, that thought himselfe so farre from it? he talkes of many yeares happines; God tels him of that perdition that the Prophet speakes of *destruction shall come upon the wicked, and he shall not see the morning thereof*, that is, such confusion as shall soone come, and make quicke dispatch of all, when it doth come.

Thus are the soules of Gods Saints bound fast up (*in the bundle of life*) by the Lord himselfe, the Lord of life; who hath bound himselfe, & his holinesse, to save them wholly harmelesse, at the worst that can come unto them in this world. But for the soules of wicked persons, they are in wofull plight, in their bodies best estate, and lie so scattered, neglected, and unregarded, (as things of naught) that God

in

in justice, lets them alone to be seized by *Satans* malice, to be a prey to that devouring Lyon, who will soone make everlasting havocke of them in hell.

And this is the *third* difference, & the Saints *third* advantage, beyond all ungodly men, wherein how easie is it to determine, who hath the better end, or which is the happier estate? any man that hath but a mans soule, indued with reason, will soone preferre safety to danger in themselves, but who soever hath a Christians soule seasoned with Religion, will preferre the former upon any termes, even the very worst, and accept the latter upon no termes, no not the best. The *fourth* advantage followeth.

4. *A child of God at the worst he can be in, in this world hath no true cause of feare: And a wicked man at his best, is in a state most fearefull.*

4. Advantage.

The

The most afflicted condition of the faithfull is void of feare, and the fairest estate of a wicked man is full of feare. Gods booke gives abundant testimony of both; fully freeing the Saint from feare, and filling the sinners heart with little else. Let us take notice of that which is revealed from the people of God in this particular.

Isa. 43. 1.
2. 3.

The Prophet *Isaiab*, foretels marvelous misery unto the Church, under the names of fire, and water, both which doe resemble, both great distresses, and great abundance of them also; you know they are mercilesse and outragious creatures, that doe wholly burne, and utterly overturne, all they prevaile upon; and like unto them must the calamities be, that are likened (to us) by them. Now though the very naming of fire, and water, of floods, and flames, (especially to this end, to be metaphors of more heavy miseries)

miserics) were enough to terrifie and affright men, and to cause feare to overflow all hope of any happines; yet the Lord will in no wise have his children afraid, but layes it upon them by expresse inhibition here, (as he also doth many a time else where) [*Fear not O Iacob my servant*] and because this might seeme an exceeding *strang* injunction, he gives them a *strong* and excellent reason for it: (*For I am with thee, the waters shall not drowne, the fire shall not burne thee &c.*) Behold when he tels them of things most *fearefull*, he will not have them feare at all.

And the *Apostle* is of the same minde, with the *prophet*, writing to the Church at *Philippi*, (and in those daies, the times were terrible, tyranny and extreame persecution prevailed exceedingly upon all such, as could be found to profess *Christianity*) and exhorting
E
them

Phil. 1. 28

them [*in nothing to feare the adversaries*] (for [*our*] is not originally expressed.) Observe how generall the exhortation is, both touching the adversaries, and the things to be feared in them [*in nothing, feare the adversaries.*] let them be *who* they may be, never so merciles, fierce, or inhumane: let their rage be *what* it will be, never so vile, villanous, dyrcfull, yea diabolical, yet when both are come to the *most*, and *worst*, that can be, neither is worth fearing.

In like manner, *John* writing to the Church of *Smyrna* gives them the same comfortable counsell, and encouragement, against their persecutions now approaching, saying, [*Fear nothing that thou shalt suffer*] and yet he tels them that their tribulation shall be so extreame and extraordinary, as if the *hell* were broke loose among them, and come from *hel* it selfe to make the earth a kinde of *hell*

unto

unto them, (for in what sence
their tormentors may be called
bell) and yet he would not
have them feare, at all, though
he tell them of that which
would feare, yea affright, yea
(almost) amaze any body, to
thinke that their enemies are
divells, that is, so exceedingly
surpassing and beyond all ordi-
nary oppressors, that none is
bad enough to present them, but
the *divell* himseife.

These are the *generall ac-*
quittances that the Lord hath
given his servants to free them
from all feares in all afflictions :
yea, let them seeme never so
fearefull, or *infernall*, they are
not all of them (no not at the
worst) worth fearing in the
craft. [*Thou drewest neere*
(saith good Jeremiah) *in the*
day of my trouble, and saidst unto
me Feare not, at when I was,
in the low dungeon] [*Though I*
walk in the valley of the shad-
ow of death, (that is, in the
F 2 most

Lam. 3. 55
56. 57.

Psal. 23 4.

Mat. 10. 28

most discomfortable state of death it selfe) yet I will feare no *evill*) saith good David. And in a word, our Lord Iesus Christ gave this for one among those many most gracious lessons he left behinde him, (*feare not them*) (let the men be as many, as mighty, as malicious, as they may be) *that can kill the body*) (be their manner of killing, as tyrannous, torturous, yea barbarous, and cruell as it can be) as if he would say, neither persecutors, nor persecutions of any kinde, are cause of any feare in the faithfull; he who spake it (*as man*) well knew what he said, (*as God*) and therefore we stand bound to obey him as Christ, both God and man; knowing right well, that if any thing in mans power, might have beene just matter of feare, to the faithfull, he would not have laid this injunction upon them, but being man, and acquainted with humane frailty, and being

God

God, having command over such corruptions, as he knew would flow from the same; he forbids *all feare*, in *all cases*, because no such feare in us, can consist with the freedome of his graces; for as true *love*, so true *faith* (*casteth out feare*,) and so doth every saving grace which he hath given us.

But now on the other side the feare of the prophane doth overflow him at his *best*, and in the fullest streame of his externall happinesse, it breakes in upon him to the disturbance of his heart, yea to the fearefull destroying of himselfe, even when he feares nothing.

Pharaoh followed *Israell* with a resolved mind to repossesse and re-enslave them unto him for ever, he hath all the successe, heart can wish, the sea is holden up for him, by the same *miraculous* hand of the *Almighty*, which kept it for his owne people to passe over,

why should he feare any ordinary danger of drowning who had an extraordinary meanes of preservation? and now that he sees God to seeme (at least) to favour him, he is bold and adventurous, and feares not, but he may follow them close; but you know the fearefull issue of this feareles attempt, to wit, his owne, and his peoples helpe overthrow, in the midst of that sea, wherein he supposed himselfe as safe, as Gods Saints were, and besides the woefull perishing of his body, the losse of his soule was most heavy of all.

Belsazzar, was where he would be (you know) when he had his Princes, his Peeres, his Wives, and Concubines, about him, to quaffe, swill, and carouse, in the sacred vessels of Gods house; how frolike, joviall and merry that King was, we may easily conceive, and how faire he had put away all feare
of

of any d. small accident from him, we may also well imagine. Howbeit behold, when he suspected, nay surmized, nothing, that might any way dis-
affect, much lesse amaze him; he hath such a suddaine, and dreadfull object in his eye, as the like hath never beene heard or read off before; a mooving hand, writing *wofull things* against him on the wall; and therewith was he so distempered, terrified, and in such a taking, as his *chattering teeth*, his *throbbing heart*, his *knocking knees*, and the rest of his quaking members though not mentioned, may signifie the state of his perplexed spirit, and distracted minde.

It were most easie to multiply many of this fearefull crew, whom the Lord hath accursed many wayes, and among the rest, with such forlorne, nay infernall feares, as many a time are
F 4 threatned

threatned unto them from him, who is *Feare* it selfe, even the most *fearefull* and terrible God, who hath shewed all men, how farre he can, and doth, and will, forever, keepe them (even at their *best*) under the bondage of base *feare*; shewing himselfe unto them evermore, both in his *word*, by those terrifying titles of a *Iudge*, and *Avenger*, a *Consuming fire*; and in this *work* by those amazing, and soule distracting *accidents*, which doe most unexpectedly overtake them, and are (as it were) the very *beginnings* of *hell*: unto them, wherein there shall be an infinite and endles (I say not *consummation* but) *combination*, of all *fearefull* things for ever to abide, and abound, upon them.

And this is the fourth *difference*, betweene the righteous and the irreligious, and the fourth *advantage* we (who are Gods) have of the other. The
faithfull

faithfull are free from feare, the prophane are full of it; it hath scarce, (And ought not to have at all) *a being*, in those that are the Lords, and belong to his love, and in the rest nothing is more powerfull, not onely being in them, but being the greatest *predominant* that beareth rule, and over-beareth; both themselves (and that when they are *best at ease*;) and all those things wherein they doe most boast, and *blesse themselves*, as their manner is to doe: And which of these *two* to take, is most easily, and quickly determined, by any man who is not feared out of his wits. The fifth advantage followeth.

5. *That the very worst that ever befell any child of God in this world, was sent of purpose to prevent the worst of all, (viz. perdition in the world to come) but the best that ever wicked men had, was but to helpe him the nearer to hell.*

5. Advan-
tage.

1 Cor. 11.
32.

The Scripture is plaine and plentiful for either part, we will take a tast of both. The *Apostle* writing to the *Corinthians* and in them to all true *Christians*, doe assure us that what correction or chastisement, we endure here, is to save us from confusion for ever, [we are saith he chastened of the Lord, that we might not be condemned with the world,] the Lord doth as good parents, doe to bad children, bestow many a whipping upon us to save us from hanging; his sharpest rod, is but to prevent a sharper sword, is it not better to smart then to bleede? or to bleede a little by the gracious hand of a good father, then to bleede to death by the severe hand of a righteous executioner?

Psal. 118.
17.

Surely there was somewhat in it, that *David* tels us it was so [good for him that he had bin afflicted] which intimates he had bene in an ill case, if it had not bene so: And what may be

be that (*sweete fruit that comes to such as have beene not once, or so smitten, but but exercised often under affliction?*) if it be not this we speake of? Or what colour of reason can be rendred why we shoud not onely rejoyce, but even glory in tribulation, if it were not a sanctified and assured meanes to escape destruction? [*Thy Rod and thy Staffe saith good David they comfort me.*] Why? how so? it were a sencelesse speech and untrue, if he had not told us before, that the Lord was his Shepheard, and dealt with him as carefull Shepheards doe, use the rod, and staffe, to save them from the beare, and wolfe, and thereupon he tels us, that no danger can affright him, because the Lord by correction delivers him, from the ruin wherinto els he would run: Better the Shepheard smite, then the wolfe bite, they are good stroakes that keepe us from the pawes & jawes of

Heb. 11 8.

Iob. 33. 18
19.

of the devourer. And this was
smelt of one of *Iob's* friends long
before these dayes, who tells
him, (and God tels us in him)
that when the Lord meaneth to
save a mans soule from the pit,
&c. he chasteneth him with paine
&c. scourging him severely,
that he may save him gracious-
ly: And wherein, but in this
alone, could his *love unto us,*
and his *chastisement of us,* goe
together?

Isa. 6. 9. 10

But on the ungodly mans
part, you have heard before,
that his best estate helps him
to hell, nothing doth more fur-
ther his eternall misery, then
the things he accounts his grea-
test mercy. What said the Lord
to *Isaiah*? *Make the heart of*
this people fat, their eares heavy,
&c. Let them remaine insensi-
ble of any instruction, incapa-
ble of any humiliation; stirre
them not, never trouble them,
but give them their owne way
and will, that they may be at
hearts

hearts ease; but to what end is all this granted? why, that their endlesse misery may be hastened, to prevent their *salvation*, which they *refused*, to procure their *damnation* which they *deserved*. And the same said *Christ* (out of this *Prophet*) to those of his time, who resting in the *same condition*, were reserved to the *same destruction*.

Doe we not reade of some that were free from all miseries, and had a kinde of exemption from all afflictions, all their dayes, and passed their time as merrily, as ever men did, (in ryot and revelling,) and the next newes we heare of them, is their everlasting overthrow for ever and ever? What was it which was said to *Dives* being in hell-torments? even this, (*Thou in thy life time hadst thy pleasure, &c. but now thou art tormented.*) As if he should say, thy pleasure, ease, delicacy, &c. were

Iob. 21. 11
12. 13.

Luk. 16. 5.

Note.

were the things that hastened this perdition wherein thou art. And you must imagine this one to be the *emblem*, or person representative of all that *Great ones* that ever came or shall come into hell: nothing is a surer *Harbinger* of eternall damnation to an ungodly man, then his freedome from temporall affliction.

Iſa. 5. 15.

Did you not heare before, that [*Therefore hell had enlarged her selfe and opened her mouth &c.*] Because it seemed most greedy to devour the fattest, and greatest, of those that were never taken downe, nor abated, by any earthly calamity, as if such men were the sweetest morsells, hell could have?

Rev. 7. 14.

15.

And doe you not reade againe on the contrary; that, [*Therefore the Saints of God are in his glorious presence day and night for ever, and ever. and have all teares wiped from their eyes,*] because they came

ons

out of great tribulation and persecution; and had beene so miserably handled here in this world, that being so *thinne*, and *leane*, so *poore*, and *bare*, for *Christ*, they might the better (even for that cause) come to be partakers of this celestiall blessednesse with *Christ*.

And this is the *fift* difference and the Saints *fift* advantage, and it is no meane, but a *mighty* ods that we have of the herein: Our *temporall* misery preventeth our *eternall*; their *temporary* happines doth hasten their *everlasting* misery. What man in his right minde, would not soone lay, which of the two he would take, whether the *worst* of this world, with assurance of *no evill* in that which is to come; or that which may be *best* here, with certainty of the *worst* that hell can yeeld him afterward.

Alwayes

Alwayes we see, a child of God at his *worst*, hath his *best* estate behinde, and a wicked mans worst is to come, when he hath had the best this world could afford him. This earth is our *hell*, (even all the hell we shall have; *heaven* shall surely follow it. It is *their heaven*, (even all the heaven they can have) and *hell* must be, shall surely ensue; and succcede it. And this is our fift advantage: The fixth and last followeth, and that is this.

6. Advan-
tage.

6. *That a childe of God at his worst, even in all his evill whatsoever, is evermore in act- all possession of all his excellencies: but a wicked man, hath nothing but ignominy and basenes, at his best, even in all his honours.*

Take a childe of God, and conceit him to be cloathed with all the calamity and contempt, you can imagine; suppose him under all the reproach and misery, that is possible to be

be put upon him, yet now in
Gods account he is,

A child of God,

An heire of heaven,

A coe-heire with Christ,

*A King, and more then a
Conquerour.*

And indeede more then can
be uttered by us, or conceived
by himselfe, according to that
of the Apostle: (*we are now the
sonnes of God, but it doth not ap-
peare what we shall be.*) As if he
should say, we know we have a
state to come, whose excellen-
cy cannot be knowne here; all
the world cannot devise a name
good enough to declare it; the
utmost here is to be called *the
sonnes of God*; but what we
shall be, is such a state as can be
called by *no name* on earth, we
have (*a life which is hid with
Christ in God*) and till he be re-
vealed from heaven, at his se-
cond comming, the glory of
this our condition cannot be
discovered.

1 Ioh. 3. 2.

Col. 3. 3.

But

But on the other side, how base and worthlesse, contemptible and contumelious, is every ungodly man, in the midst of all his glory and renowne, and all the applause the world puts upon him? he that takes notice by what tearmes the *Holy Ghost* doth enstille them, cannot but say, we say the truth at least in part; for their *full infamy* being *infinite*, that is also reserved, till the *infinite honour* of the elect shall be manifested. In the meane time are they not called,

Children of bell,

Slaves of Satan,

Vile persons,

Dogs, swine, vipers, yea

Devells.

With many other more, of the like *loathsome kinde*, inspired by the Lord, penned by his secretaries, recorded in his scriptures, preached by his messengers, and remaining for ever, as the righteous brands, and most proper

proper appellations, that God himfelfe hath put upon them, & which they muſt beare from him, who is *too great*, and *too good*, to unſay, one jot, one title, of that he hath ſpoken.

To inſtance particular perſons were to little purpoſe, all that are mentioned by name, or comprehended, and meant, in that peerles Catalogue which we have in this Chapter, though they were expoſed to the worſt and utmoſt contempts that could be, for *infamy*, and to the moſt tyrannous and villanous torments that could be for *extremity*; yet the worſt word we heare of them is this: [*All theſe died in the faith, obtained a good report.*] And againe [*of whom the world was not worthy*] Ioe a world (nay more then a world) of honour, in two or three words, for the *whole world*, (to wit, of *worldly* and *ungodly perſons*) is not valued at the worth of one child of God, not by God himfelfe
who

Verſ. 13.

39.
Verſ. 32.

hath bought them at a *high price*, yet gave no more for them, then he thought them *worth*; and hath made knowne their worth to the world, by the *price* he bestowed on them, *viz.* the *most precious blood* of his *only Sonne*, which it pleased him not to thinke *too good*, to be given for the purchase of their redemption, and glory. So that they are not *over-valued*, at this *invaluable* rate, seeing the most wise God out of his owne wildome, and love, hath set thus much upon them, and in not accounting the world worthy of them, hath also pleased (through the merits of the Lord that bought them), to account them *worthy of the world to come*, and of all that *glory, immortallity, life, and blessednes* there, which all the wit, reason, and utmost reach, of mortall man, is not so much as able once to guesse at; for it being so absolutely infinite, it doth infinitely

nitely surpasse all possibility of man to aime at it, much lesse comprehend.

On the contrary now, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appeare? or what shall be accounted of them, if the Lord come to give sentence upon them at the very best of their estate? What are they worth? how are they esteemed before him? why *nothing, vanity, yea, lesse then nothing, lighter then vanity;* more vile then the basest vermine they treade upon, yea more vile then the earth which harboureth both them, and all *base vermine* whatsoever; no creature so bad as they, vpon the whole earth, onely the *Diuel* in hel, he is somewhat worse, and by *how much* he is worse then they, (because he made them naught,) by *so much* are they worse then all other creatures, who were by them, and for their sakes, *accursed.*

To be intituled *dogs, swine, vipers*

vipers and such like, is onely to shew their basenes, as these creatures seeme to us, not as they are in themselves; for so saith *Iob*, [*they are not to be compared to the dogs of my flocke;*] for these creatures, God made them exceeding good, or ely sin (*their sin*) hath made them so naught, as we usually account them to be, in themselves they have no sin, nor ought els that is bad, but orely by them, by whose sins they are corrupted, and degenerate from that *noble excellency*, and those *notable qualities* of their nature, which once they had, when they had an estate as pure in nature, as we our selves in our created condition. Now therefore as the *Divell* onely is worst of all, because he made wicked men so bad, so they (next him) are the worst in the world, because all other things are imbas'd by them.

Besides, take the *mightiest*
among

among the men of the world, have not their names perished with them? and are become as rotten as their bodies? yea worse because whereas the *carkase* is consumed in the earth and annoyes none, their name lives like *carrion* above ground unburied, and stinkes more, and more strongly from one age to another, and shall live to rot through al generations to come for ever, till they shall be againe raised out of rottennes, to live and meete their living *loathsome* names before the Lords judgments seate, who shall then, and there, put an end to both, by throwing both, into the bottomles pit of endles perdition, they being the men that must rise (to fall) to everlasting shame and contempt.

To particulate *Caine, Sautle, Ahitophell, Ahab, Judas*, or the rest of branded persons whom the living & most glorious God, hath marked for remarkable infamy,

were not to much purpose, and we have had occasion to note them before: it sufficeth to know, that their glory is with shame, and that all the *reputation* they have had with men at the *greatest*, hath but made their *reproach* greater with *God*. Men have heaped honourable titles of greatnes upon them to dignifie and renowne them, which have bin but the poore vapours of their ayery words, breathed out either for feare or for flattery, and have vanished in the very utterance; and *God* hath laden them with heavy, & most ignominious appellations; which his mouth having spoken and his pen having witten, must remaine to cleave for ever, unto that most unworthy, and miserable memoriall which the world hath of them, who knowes them by no names, or titles, but onely by those that are worse then none at all.

And touching both (in this
last

last difference) it may be well and safely observed, that the *worse words* the world hath gi-
 ven Gods Saints, the *better*
 and *more glorious titles* are gi-
 ven them of God himselfe: and
 the more men have renowned
 the other, the more hath the
 Lord abhorred them, and made
 them abominable, to all eyes
 and eares.

His owne *Sonne* (our Savi-
 our) when in the dayes of his
 flesh he dwelt among us, had as
 bad, yea, and farre worse lan-
 guage given him, then any that
 ever lived; he that reade's his
 life, knowes how oft he was
 abused, and most basely vilified,
 he *was a Samaritane*, he *was*
mad, he *had a divell*, &c. but
 the Lord God (his father, and
 our father) hath given him a
name above all names, and ho-
 nour and glory above all princi-
 palities and powers; and so
 much the more gloriously exal-
 ted him, by how much among

Ioh. 30. 17
 Phil. 2. 9.

G men

men he was become the scorne, and contempt of the people. And in like manner doth he deale with *Christians* (as he did with *Christ*) according to the eminency of their piety (for which, *the greater it is*, they suffer greater reproach,) he gives them more excellent glory, even in the eyes of men, as we might shew in many examples. And this is our *sixt* and last *Advantage*.

And now (beloved and longed for in the Lord) what shall we say to these things? here we have had a *short* and *summary* survey of those singular, and celestial advantages, that the Lords people have, (even at their *worst*) of all ungodly men at their *best*. I say a *short* and *summary* survey of them, for if we should enlarge our selves in the discovery of them so farre as we might, *when* should we have done? or *where* should we end? or, if we could manifest them as they are, (which

(which mortality cannot doe)
 there could be neither end, nor
measure, of our Discourse; nay,
 it might be truly said of these
 excellent things, as the *Evan-*
gelist speaketh of the rest of the
 acts, and sayings of Christ,
 which are written, that [*the*
whole world would not containe
the bookes, &c.] that must con-
 taine, the full declaration of
 those infinite things, wherein
 the true comfort of the Saints
 doth consist; for they are (in
 truth) *unutterable*, nay indeede,
unsearchable, as the *Apostle* doth
 plainly signifie when he saith
 [*he heard (being wrapt into the*
third heaven) things not to be ut-
tered.] And if of the mysteries
 & secrets of the Gospell (which
 els where he speaketh of,) much
 more may it be most truly said
 of the consolation, benefit, & re-
 ward of the *faithful & persecuted*
professors of the same, that they
 are such [*As eye hath seene, eare*
hath not heard, nor entred into
 the

Ioh. 21, 25

1 Cor. 2, 9

heart of man to apprehend,] the naturall man is meant in the former, the spiritnall, may be understood in the latter. For grace is as unable (mixt with infirmity) to comprehend heavenly things that are glorious, as nature (void of grace) is, to conceive a right, and reach those that be holy and gracious. Why then, what shall we say to these heavenly things, thus heaped up together, to make us wholly happy? If the Lord have laid them up in his booke, should not we lay them up in our bosomes? And blesse him abundantly who hat it so over-abundantly blessed us with these benedictions, which are sent us, so to sweeten the bitterest cup of our calamity, that we might drinke the bottome of it with all cheerefulness and rejoycing? what said the good Prophet of God once, in a case of this kinde, [*Rejoyce O heaven, and be joyfull O earth, breake forth into praises O ye mountaines*

mountaines, for the Lord hath comforted his people, and shewed mercy upon his afflicted] and even this, may and ought all Gods people now to speake (concerning the permisses) in the particulars that we have revealed.

How came the good Christians of the primitive times, when persecution was so sore and extreame, not onely (as was noted before) (to rejoyce, but even to glory in tribulation?) *to suffer with joy yea with much joy, the spoiling of their goods?* To goe from the Consistory with bloudy shoulders, yet glad hearts, rejoycing that they were accounted worthy to *undergoe the worst for Christ?* And the Apostle who was so abundant, above all the rest, (not onely in the labours, but in the sufferings of the Gospel, also) telleth us plainly [*Great is my rejoycing, I am full of comfort, I have* (not onely abundantly

Rom. 5. 3.

Heb. 10.
34.

Act. 5. 40.
41.

2 Cor 7. 4.

dantly joy, but) joy over-abundant in all my tribulations.]

These are strange words, yet true, and such as he saith, he hath already in possession, and not onely in some *lighter* afflictions, but in his *heaviest* distresses, even in all his tribulations;

To have Great joy,

To be full of comfort, yea

To be over-full, or to over-abound,

is such a straine of speech, as never fell from man, by any *sence* or *reason* of flesh and bloud, but onely from the *spirit* of God, and the power of his grace, which had perswaded his soule of the *sweetnes* of this saving truth that we teach; that a man at his *worst* should not onely be *full*, but *overflow* with comfort and joy, which is more then any wicked man can say of his *best*, for all the happines under heaven cannot *fill*, much lesse *overflow* the heart of mā, he cannot be satisfied, much les can he be
glutted

glusted indeed, or surfet in trush,
 with all temporall delights, he
 that had the largest share in the
 of a *my mortall man* that ever li-
 ved, (even *Salomon*) tels us they
 cannot give full contentment, &
 againe [*the eye cannot be satisfied*
with seeing, nor the eare with hea-
ring, &c.] but heare, at our very
 worst, we have our measure of
 joy and solace, pressed downe to
 the *bottom*, filled up to the *brim*
 and running over upon us, from
 the Lord, who telleth us, that
 these light & short troubles (doe
 not onely thus consist with our
 great rejoicing here present, but
 they (*procure unto us in heaven,*
an exceeding excessive (for so the
 words doe sound in their true
 sence) *eternall weight of glory:*]
 Loe, what words the *Holy Ghost*
 useth to expresse these things to
 us, [*exceeding, excessive,*] to give
 us to know, that these being the
greatest words which can shew
 any thing to us, the things in-
 tended in them, are *greater then*
al. words can expresse. And

Eccles. 5.
10.

2 Cor. 4.
17.

1 Thes. 5,
16.
Phil. 4 13.

And why then doe we *droope*, or *faint* under any thing (dearely beloved?) how ill doth sorrow or feare (of this sort) become a *Sainte*? who is not only commanded to [*rejoyce in the Lord evermore.*] but hath reason given him so to doe, in the things (thus farre) declared by us. *Questionles*, if we could settle our thoughts upon these divine things, they would produce very divine effects in our hearts, and put us (as it were) into heaven before hand, (*in part*) and make us much the more meete, for the absolute possession of the perfections thereof in due time.

And this is the *first use* of this most worthy point of truth wherein though we have seemed long to insilt; yet know, it is such good being here, (as *Peter* once said) that we could even build Tabernacles in the blessed comfort of the same, as finding it to be much harder to
get

get out, then to goe on further in the discovery hereof; wherein a faithfull man is (after a sort) transfigured, and mounted aloft farre beyond all mortality, misery & vexation of men, or diuels in this world; which now (thus raysed) either he seeth not, or if he doe, he beholdeth them as farre under his feete, with a Christian, and holy contempt, and himselfe hath (his heart being settled on these things) his seate on high with the Lord, and his blessed and beloved ones, unto whom he seemeth to be translated, in the sweete apprehensions of his soule, while he is conversant in these sacred, and supernaturall meditations; and beholdeth the glorious face of God, shining upon him, and his owne heart so dazeled with the heavenly lustre of this most blessed light, that he cannot well tell (for the time) where he is, whether in the body or no; his soule soaring a loft, and
 finding

finding such inconceivable contentment in these consolations.

But we must put an end to our discourse of these comforts, and leave the rest, to that time when we shall come into *actuall* & full possession of *endlesse life*, where we shall enjoy the infinitesimall of those things, whereof all that can be said of the *best* things that are *here*, are but the *beginnings*, & first fruit, of that which we shall have *there*.

2 Vse:
Terror to
Persecu-
tors.

And so we come to a *second use* of this blessed truth which concerneth wicked men, unto whom we must charge our note and *sing another tune*, from the true consequence of the same; for it soundeth (as all heavenly truth doth) *heavily*, in their *ear*es, and was not more *sweetly* *musicall* to the Saints, then it is *dolefull miserable*, to sinners. We neede not say much to them, the losse of all the *afore*said *happinesse* and *felicity*

licity of the faithful, is more then a little, inasmuch as we have seene, (as we have gone all along from one passage to another,) their misery and unhappinesse, hath still beene entwisted *oppositely* to the joy of Gods chosen, and entailed thereunto; so that they are not onely *deprived* of so much joy, as hath appeared to the faithful in every particular, from point to point; but are further *assured* of as many, and as great mischies, as our mercies doe amount unto; every *comfort* to us, carrying with it a *curse* also unto them.

Yet over and above all that we have said, tho is somewhat more falling upon them, to their further terror from this truth; and that is meant unto the persecutors and tormentors of Gods people, who doe fall often affright, and terrifie, those whom they have in their power, with big, & bitter words;

words, with cruell, and cursed speakings; viz: that *this* and that they will doe, and they shall, I, that they shall well know, that it is in their power to exercise their pleasure, and to have their will upon them: Iust, as insolent and imperious as Pilate, [*knewest thou not that I have power to binde thee, &c.*] and these tyrants will imprison will torture, will kill, what will they not doe? and what shall not Gods child endure, if either vile words, or villanous deeds, may put them into dread, distraction, yea, desperation?

Iam. 2. 20.

But wilt thou know, O thou vaine man] and vile miscreant, how idly all this is uttered to terrifie him, who can by vertue of the glorious light of this gracious truth, triumphantly re-
 tort all this upon thy selfe, to thine owne terror and amazement of heart, and tell thee to thy teeth, that seeing the worst of Gods child is better then the best,

best, of any wicked man, therefore all thou canst say, or doe, cannot make him halfe so miserable as thy selfe art, who doest thus menace the members of *Iesus Christ*. When thou hast spent out all thy malice, spent up all the venime, spent, and emptied upon them, all the malignity and gall the Divell ever engendered, and increased in thee; yet even then, thou hast not made him halfe so unhappy, as thou now art in thy conceited happiness, and exemption, from all these extremities.

And the poore distressed *Martir* of the Lord *Iesus*, may say in the triumph, of a true and powerfull faith, O Tyrant or oppressor, know, that now in this agony, in these anguishes, I will not change states with thee, my case is better then thine, althou canst doe, cannot make me so bad as thy selfe, my tortures are to be preferred to thy pleasures, my racks, chaines, scour-

scourges, &c. cannot make me so miserable, as thy palace, prosperity, ease, honour, and power makes thee: I am more joyous under all these great grievances, then thou canst be in all thy greatest glories: doe thou persecute I will joy, doe thou afflict I will pray; smite thou, I will smile; my God hath laid a sweete, a soveraigne, a healing, yea a heavenly plaister, to all these bitter sores, which fully cures them, and comforts me. namely, that he hath taught me to learne, that which now, I have learned to feele, that my worst estate, is better then thy best. the sweetnes of which lesson, makes all evils easie to swallow, and of quicke, and comfortable digestion, even at the extreamest, that they can be. And herein I joy, and will joy, maugre all the divells in hell, and bell-bownds on earth.

Would not this, or the like speech unto this, make the cares of Tyrants so single, and their hearts

hearts to *tremble*? would it not vex & torture their very spirits within them, to heare these voices sounding from the mouths of those, who are under their heavy vexation?

Certainely, it would worke one way or other with them, if they could but beleev it; either it would cause repentance unto salvation and make them weary of their wickednes, & most willing to becom as one of *them* whom they thus abuse; or to fret and fume, and gnaw out their owne bowells, to see themselves defeated in all the impious purposes, which being to make the Lords people most miserable of all men, cannot by the *most*, and *worst*, & *all*, they can doe, make them any way so miserable as themselves, who (*in their owne opinion*) are more happy thē any. Doe you thinke it would not make their hearts to *boyle*, yea, to *burne* within them, and *chafe* them so thoroughly, that they should be forced to *foame* at

mouth, with indignation, and distemper? Were a man but in their bowels, to see how they fret, and vex inwardly, when they perceive, *God himselfe* to laugh them to scorn in heaven, and *his people* to laugh at them on earth, to see that all the mallice and villany the Divell can arme them withall, cannot make anothers estate *as worst*, so bad then their owne, *at best*, then would something appeare, as the effect and efficacy of this truth, which we have told them, it may be they would cease their bloody hands against the blessed of the Lord, and begin to lay them on themselves, as *Judas*, and some other of their predecessors, have done. But our God, the God of heaven, doth suffer the Divell, the God of this world to blind fold their eyes that they should not see, or know, or acknowledge this truth, and so by the ignorance thereof, they worke out, at once *Their*

*Their owne perdition, and
Our salvation, and make
Vs, blessed Martirs,
Themselves accursed Male-
factors,*

Phil. 1. 28

in despite of all that they con-
trarily intend; and hereof, if
they might, or could be per-
swaded, no question were to be
made, but they would quickly
become, either *better* or *worse*.
But it is misery enough that
they cannot be brought to be-
leeve the same; oh, what saith
the Apostle [*If our Gospell be
hid, it is hid to them that are lost*]

2 Cor. 4 3.

A heavy sentence, in asmuch as
by ignorance (especially *willfull*
of any truth, *more sinne* is mul-
tiplied against God, *more service*
is done to the Divell, more
mischiefe to *men*, and (confe-
quently) more plagues heaped
on, and wrath stored up against
the day of wrath, to be powred
by the mighty arme of *Al-
mighty God*, upon the heads of
all those, that have thus encrea-
sed.

Rom. 2.

fed their impieties before him, who shall not escape the full poyson of all those his *envenomed vialls* which he hath revealed from heaven, to be reserved in hell for them.

But we will now *leave* these men, as men *left of God*, and not so happy as once to give us the *hearing*, or the *Lord*, the *beleeving* of this truth; but given over to be *drunke* with their owne *delusions*, to their owne damnation, perswading themselves so well of their owne evil estate, and being so ill perswaded of the good, and blessed condition of Gods children, that they meane to continue as they are, and to proceede in their impiety against the Lord, and oppression against his people, till they have wrought out, their owne eternall confusion by *both*, and provoked the dreadfull indignation of the *Lord God* to come upon them to the uttermost, through this double
iniquite

iniquitie, committed against his highest Majesty.

And in our *last use* we will turne our speech to all manner of persons, endeavouring to doe our best, to give them that true information, which floweth from this Point whereof we now treat, and the premisses of the same, which have beene so particularly and plentifully related, at large unto us.

And the consequence of this truth for matter of instruction, looketh *both* at the Saints of God *themselves*, and also at all others, that are not yet revealed to be such.

For the *former*, viz: those who have beene already found and approoved to be faithfull, whose happy interest is therefore undeniable in this heavenly truth, it calls for their constant, continuall, and perpetuall *perseverance*, in that their estate of grace and holinesse, the worst whereof,
is

3 Use.

Instructiō
to all men

is so good, as we have heard. For it our first being in grace (while we are yet but *babes*, or *beginners* therein) doe give us assurance of so much consolation, doubtles, if we continue and hold out to the end, as we grow, and goe on, in grace, so doth the sweete savour of this happines encrease and multiply upon us. But I hope the discovery of the comforts aforesaid, is such, as may save me the labour, of any further pressing of this point upon them, and that their state of the blessednesse of them is so pleasant, as they have *sensible arguments* within them sufficient, both to perswade them to tarry where they are; and to oppose, and repulse all suggestions to the contrary. And therefore I will not persue them with more words, for whose sakes especially, all that is past, hath beene uttered, and whose settled resolutions touching their state of
grace,

grace, are such, and so unmove-
able as was the *Apostles*, who
said, [*I am sure, that neither*
death, nor life, nor Angels, nor
Principalities, nor Powers, nor
things present, nor things to come
nor height, nor depth, nor any
other creature, shall be able to se-
parate me from the love of God,
which is in Iesus Christ our
Lord.] This was his, of him-
selfe, and the *Romanes*; this is,
and ought to be ours, of our
selves, and of all true *Christians*;
and therein we will rest, and
turne our last speech unto those
that yet are not turned to the
Lord, by any visible manifesta-
tion of that faith, the vertue
whereof, doth give them their
part, and portion in the saving
peace, and comfort of that
which hath beene uttered.

And what can we urge (*ei-*
ther more or lesse) upon them,
then that they should now (*at*
last) learne to leave their for-
mer sinfull, and ungodly condi-
tion,

Rom 8.38

39.

tion, and cleave to the Lord, in the power and truth of sincerity and sanctification; that in as much as they are not yet *Canonized* of the Lord for Saints, nor have their *names written in the books of life*, (so farre as their life sheweth unto men) they might now (*once*) bethinke themselves what they are, and come out of that estate, wherein they cannot be happy.

And what more *weighty*, or *worthy* argument can we use, then this which is so powerfull to perswade, if it be duely pondered of them. For it is drawne from that which nature affecteth, and desireth *in all men above all things*, to wit, the having of a *good*, yea the *best* estate, and condition, that is to be had in this world, and a much more better, in heaven, then can be had upon any terms here. And can there be a better estate, then that? or any so good as that? which

Is impossible to be had, at the worst, and

The worst whereof, is better then the best of any other.

Behold, out of this estate *all prosperity is misery*, and in it, *all misery is prosperity*: have we not made it more then manifest, by such abundance of most *infallible, divine, and undoubted* evidence, as neither *devils*, nor men, can colourably gaine-say? And is not such a state worth seeking among those to whom it is *solely*, and wholly, appropriated of the Lord? Who would not be a *Saint* upon such tearmes, and embrace piety, because of the precious and peerlesse blessednesse, it brings with it, upon a mans universall state here, and that which is eternall in Heaven? Why, let men learne to reason and dispute thus.

If there be a sort of people who are in such a state as hath beene said

the worst whereof is simply good, and incomparable better then the best estate of any other whatsoever; what doe I, what am I, out of that society? I see my selfe miserable (as I am) at my best, I will surely out of my selfe, and strive with all my strength to be one of those men, among whom the meanest fare so well, when they are in the worst estate that can be.

And if (thus) *God* make us able to beginne to argue (for his glory) against our selves, when these first propositions be well understood, and applyed of us, we shall be able (by his grace) to frame more comfortable premisses, and to goe forward in this *divine disceptation*, with consideration of those further things, the conclusion and inference whereof, will minister unto us yet more courage, to cleave unto the Lord in the communion of his Saints.

For

For why? the *former* argument was taken from the *miseries, grievances, persecutions, and oppressions* of Gods people, and yet it is powerfull, and able to conclude, both a *necessity*, (& includeth also an *excellency*) of our separation from sinners, to become of that number who are so happy, in their very *miserie*: but *this latter* may be taken from the *graces* of the same men from whose distresses alone, we reasoned before; and for the *further wooing*, and *faster glewing* of us unto the heavenly corporation, of such as are happily incorporated into *Christ Iesus*, it may (in the second place) be framed thus.

If the *worst* of Gods people, *viz.* their troubles, miseries, & oppressions, be such as doe exceede all the well-being of other men, if in their *grievances* and vexations, it goe so well with them, how happy must these men be considered in their

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graces,

graces, and the employment of them? if their bitter sorrowes be so sweete, how will the *sweete sap*, and savour of Gods spirit taste; and relish in them? if out of cruelty, tyranny, and all manner of evill so much good may issue, when they have to doe with wicked and unreasonable men, who can conceive the consolation that shall accrew unto them, in the free and peaceable exercise of their graces, wherein they deale onely with Gods owne Majesty and such of their fellow-brethren and sisters, as are truly gracious with themselves? If the troubled waters, which are so muddied with the foule fruit of *Sasans*, and mens malice, may yeelde such joy, what will flow from the blessed influence of God himselfe thinke ye, when he shall leade them to those Welsof salvation, whence they shall draw *freely*, & *drinke* *at their fill*, of those pure christall streames,

streames, which himselfe hath distilled? Surely every man must needes (in all reason) think that if their *worst estate* of griefe and milery be *so good*, this of grace and peace, cannot but be *better*, and yeeld sweeter fruit then the former; and so the *best estate* of a wicked man being so farre behinde their *worst*, must needes be much more behinde this, and utterly incomparable thereunto.

And yet, though this be *much* the *most*, and *best* of all, is yet to come, viz: their state of *glory*, which shall be the reward both of their *grievances*, and *graces* also; and from that a man whose heart were set aright, might *lastly* reason thus.

These men (*Gods Saints*) were happier then I, at the *worst* of their miseries, even in the midst of their enemies; They were yet more happy then so, when with their *God*, and with each other among themselves,

they might peaceably use their *graces*; the least of these two, was more then a little beyond my best: But their *best* of all, beeing yet to come, *to wit*, their blessednesse and glory in heaven with the *God* of heaven; what shall I conceive of their inconceivable felicity, then and there? and how infinitely unhappy am I, that am so short of the *good* they have, in their *very evill*? and am not yet so farre, as to be equall with them in their meanest, and most afflicted condition? Surely it being so well with them in their *grievances*; it cannot but be much better with them in their *graces*, and *best of all*, in their *glory*. O the hidden (*yet heavenly*) estate of these holy ones; which is so heavenly, that it must be *hidden*, there being no possibility on earth to reveale it. *Who* would be out of that state, wherein is so much excellency, that every *evill* therein, is exceeding *good*, and every
good

good exceedeth each other? If
a mans heart be not *chained* to
the *Divell*, and by the *Divell*,
to the *world*, to be kept here,
in that perpetuall *prison* of infi-
delity, and prophanes, which
will bring him to that *perdition*
which is due thereunto; he can-
not but be drawne out of him-
selfe, and his sinfull state, with
this *three-fold cord*, and be tyed
fast for ever (as one enamou-
red and inflamed) to the *Lord*
God, in the felloship of those his
Saints, who having beene faith-
full before him here (both in
doing his will, and *suffering* for
the same) have received the
wages, both of their *faith* and
sufferings, in the Kingdome for
which they suffered, wherein
they shall see *him as he is*, and
with *him*, his blessed *Sonne*, his
eternall *Spirit*, his, beloved
Saints, in that life and immorta-
lity, blisse, and felicity, which
God who is faithfull, hath per-
formed to them, promised, to us,

and to all the rest of his holy ones, keeping them, who are *already* in actuall possession, not absolutely perfect (*as being yet without us*) till wee shall bee brought unto them, and both they, and wee (and all the elect) unto the Lord our God, at the last day, to be compleate in that entire, and eternall perfection of glory, the *hope* whereof gives us heart, and makes us wayte, and sigh in our soules, looking and longing for that glorious appearance of his, which shall make us to appeare in glory with him, for ever and ever.

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